

American Girl®

March/April 2001

Free Baby-Animal Iron-Ons!

Make Your **Dreams** Come True
Sweet **Spring Bags** to Make

Take Our **Friendship Quiz!**



Contents

Volume 9, Number 2

2 Letters from You

3 Girls Express

8 Heart to Heart

Being Different

10 Amelia's Notebook

Ciao, Amelia!

12 Cooking

Foolish Food

14 Make It Happen!

20 Craft

Bitty Bags

24 Begin Again

A peek at the new
Wild at Heart book

32 Quiz

Pal Predictor

34 Catch the Spirit!

40 The Giggle Gang

43 Who's That Girl?

45 Mini Book

Home Run

47 Help!

49 Shining Star

Plus: AG Iron-Ons

See AG online!

Visit www.americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine! Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.



Bitty Bags

Make pretty pouches to tote your treasures.

20

AG Iron-Ons

Make a super-sweet T-shirt like this! Look for the iron-ons in the middle of this issue.



Make It Happen!

Want to make your dreams come true? Here's how!

14



American Girl®

Celebrating Girls, Yesterday and Today®



On the Cover

Meet Jessica Kavanagh, age 10.
What was the best part about
cuddling these bunnies all
day at our photo shoot?
“I liked how their noses
would wiggle!” she says.



Jessica Kavanagh



Catch the Spirit!

For these girls, cheer-
leading is the sport.

34

Letters from You



Family Ties

"A Sister Story" from your November/December 2000 issue was very touching. I was adopted by my American family two and a half years ago, and when I read this article, it was like going back in time. I really related to Emily—I was also very nervous the first time I met my new family. Thank you so much for this great article!

Babsyana Sanders
Age 14, Maryland



Tricky Times

I loved "Holiday Magic" in the November/December issue. I used some of the tricks at a friend's party, and everyone thought they were great. We had so much fun! I think you should always have a magic section in your issues.

Alex Shipley
Age 11, Oklahoma



Sister Sitter

Thanks for printing Amelia's "Terrible Two" in November/December. I am going to get a

baby brother or sister soon, so I will be helping my parents out a lot. I also took the "Are You Ready to Babysit?" quiz. Even though I didn't answer all the questions perfectly, it helped me think about how hard I'll have to work at being a good babysitter!

Jace Thowstad
Age 8, Minnesota



Wish Book

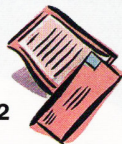
I was so pleasantly surprised when I came across "A Little Book of Wishes" in your November/December issue. I loved the unique ideas it gave me, and I keep it in a very safe place in my closet!

Kelley Coughlan
Age 13, Maine

Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

AmericanGirl
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@pleasantco.com.

No matter how you write us, be sure to include your name and birth date. We can't use every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

AmericanGirl

PRESIDENT
Ellen Brothers

VICE PRESIDENT, EDITORIAL DEVELOPMENT
Judith Woodburn

PUBLISHER
Diane Morgenthaler

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Michelle Nowady Watkins

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Kristi Thom

MANAGING EDITOR
Barbara E. Stretchberry

FEATURES EDITOR
Laurie Shoup Herr

EDITOR
Laura Torres

ARTICLES EDITOR
Emma MacLaren Henke

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Camela Decaire, Therese Kauchak,
Trula Magruder, Nancy Holyoke, Julie Williams

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Susan Casey

SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER
Karn Litsheim

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTORS
Valerie Paulin, Ginger Peissig

CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Candace Pardon

MARKETING MANAGER
Shawn Niebeling

CONSUMER SOURCE MANAGERS
Sarah Moeser, Joey Ravenscroft

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT
Melissa Philpott

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Rebecca Bernstein, Katie Brokaw, Erin Falligant,
Suzi Galloway, Julie Grogan, Steve Ingham, Josette Kurey,
Julie Matthews, Ben Neff, Paulette Passanisi,
Suzanne Roloff, Lori Strong, Tonya Talbert

COVER CREDITS: Wardrobe styling: Jacqueline Bennett, Maria-Stefania at Utopia. Hair: Bruno LeRoux. Purple shirt: DKNY. Skirt: Kaboo. OTHER CREDITS: FOOLISH FOOD—Shirt: M.D.P. for Alphabet at Jamati International LTD. BITTY BATS—Green shirt: DKNY. Orange sweater: Old Navy. Tank Top: Metropolitan Prairie at Rhonda International Showroom. Pink shirt: GPD of Petit Boy at Jamati International LTD. Blue shirt: Old Navy. WHO'S THAT GIRL?—Photos of Sharon Creech as a girl and in kayak courtesy of Sharon Creech. Portrait photo by L. Rigg. Book covers courtesy of HarperCollins.

AMERICAN GIRL® (ISSN 1062-7812) is published bimonthly by Pleasant Company Publications, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562. Copyright © 2001 by Pleasant Company. All rights reserved. Subscription rates: One year (six issues) \$19.95. Canadian subscriptions \$24 U.S. Funds. Single issues (current or back copies) \$4.95. Prices subject to change. Periodical postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to American Girl, P.O. Box 37313, Boone, IA 50037-0313.

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-234-1278. SUBSCRIBER: Send change of address information six weeks before moving to American Girl, P.O. Box 37313, Boone, IA 50037-0313. Send old address label (recent mailing label is best), new address, and new telephone number, or call 1-800-234-1278. Occasionally, American Girl makes its list of adult and family names available to other reputable companies for their offering of products and services. We make every effort to ensure that girls' names are not included on this list. If you prefer not to receive such mail, please call our customer service department at 1-800-234-1278 or write to us at P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986.

EDITORIAL OFFICES: American Girl, Editorial Department, P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986. Pleasant Company Publications cannot accept liability for loss or damage of photographs or other materials. Unsolicited materials will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. ALL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED BY AMERICAN GIRL BECOME THE SOLE PROPERTY OF AMERICAN GIRL AND MAY BE USED WITHOUT COMPENSATION OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT. All the instructions in American Girl have been tested by children and adults. Results from their testing were incorporated into the text. Because of differing tools, materials, conditions, and individual skills, the publisher disclaims liability for any injuries, losses, or other damages that may result from using information in this magazine. American Girl®, Celebrating Girls, Yesterday and Today®, Girls Express®, and Wild at Heart™ are trademarks of Pleasant Company. American Girl is a trademark of Marissa Moss. Pleasant Company trademarks cannot be used without the express written consent of Pleasant Company. ISBN 1-58485-114-7.

AMERICAN GIRL IS PUBLISHED BY
PLEASANT COMPANY PUBLICATIONS
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

E-mail address: im_agmag_editor@pleasantco.com
<http://www.americangirl.com>



Winner of a 2000
Parents' Choice
Gold Award



The National
Awards Finalist

Girls Express



Buzzword

American girls everywhere will be using this buzzword this season:

vivacious

How to say it: vuh-VAY-shus

What it means: lively

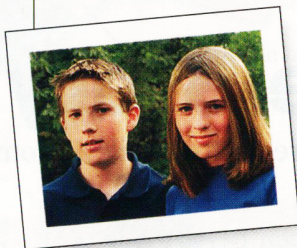
Where it comes from: *Vivacious* comes from the Latin word *vivere*, which means "to live."

One way to use it: "With her vivacious personality, Vivian was always the center of attention."



The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? Answer on page 42.

Sweet Success



Three years ago, Elise Macmillan and her brother Evan started the Chocolate Farm, a Web company that sells sweet treats like "Lemon Sheep Munch" and "Pigs in Mud." Elise, 13, cooks up recipes, and Evan, 15, runs the Web site. The Colorado sibs hire

friends to help. "Holidays like Easter get really busy!" says Elise.

Elise *Macmillan*? Chocolate *Farm*? That reminds us of a song! Sing the words below to the tune of "Old MacDonald":

Elise Macmillan's Chocolate Farm
Is her online biz.

Barnyard treats she makes herself—
She's a candy whiz!

With a recipe here,
And a Web site there,
Here a cow, there a pig—
Wow! This order's really big!

Elise Macmillan's Chocolate Farm—
chocolatefarm.com!



Funny Feats

Nothing to do? Challenge yourself with a silly stunt! Check out these wacky records set by AG readers:

"I hopped on my pogo stick 546 times without stopping!"

Michelle :-)
Age 13, Florida



"I balanced 256 plastic cups on top of my head for one whole minute!"

Claire :-)
Age 13, North Carolina



"I made a hopscotch with 100 squares. My friend and I played all afternoon!"

Kelsey Kramer
Age 9, Iowa



"I picked up 123 pennies with my toes and dropped each one in a cup!"

Rebekah :-)
Age 14, Illinois

"My school formed a group hug with 697 people! We did it very carefully so that no one got squashed. We broke the record in the Guinness Book of Records!"

Frammy Corry
Age 10, Wisconsin

Enjoy doing your own funny feats—
but be safe! Don't try any stunts
with food.

Snap Dragons

These little bugs love to hang around.

Step 1

Paint a mini wood clothespin (available at craft stores) with acrylic paint. Let dry. Glue on googly eyes. Let dry.

Step 2

Fold a small piece of netting (available at fabric stores) in half. Cut 2 sets of wings, as shown.



One set

Step 3

Pinch the clothespin open. Glue the middle of the wings inside the top of the clothespin. Clip onto a piece of wax paper to dry.

Clip them here, there, and everywhere!

True Story

Will a wildfire destroy Bailey's home?



Smoke behind our ranch

Dear American Girl,

I live on a ranch that's been in our family for 80 years. Last summer, we thought we might lose it forever.

We'd been at the county fair all week. When we got back, fire trucks were at our gate. The sky was glowing bright orange, and ashes were falling everywhere. The firemen said we had one hour to pack up and leave!

The hour went by fast. I took my drawings from kindergarten, pictures of my grandparents, and other things I couldn't replace.

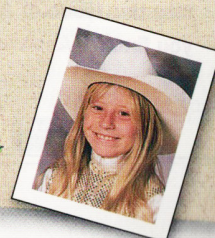
The air was so hot it hurt my lungs. We couldn't take all our horses, cows, and chickens with us, so we opened the gates and let them run. We didn't want them to be trapped by the fire. Then we left for town.

Luckily, the firefighters saved our ranch. A week later, we returned. The mountain was black, and the ashes looked like snow. We rode on horseback for days, looking for our other horses and cattle. We found most of them, except for a calf we'd raised. Some of the cows had burned hooves.

Now the grass is green again, and the deer and elk have returned. I wish the fire had never happened, but I'm glad we're O.K.

Sincerely,

Bailey O'Neal
Age 9, Wyoming



What's for Lunch?

With these tips, a planet-friendly meal is in the bag.



'Toon Talk



If you've watched the cartoon series *Angela Anaconda*, you know Angela's brainy best friend, Gina Lash. Now meet the voice behind Gina—11-year-old Bryn McAuley.

To play Gina, Bryn first records her lines in a studio. Animators then match Gina's mouth to Bryn's words. To make characters sound more cartoony, technicians tweak some actors' voices electronically. Not Bryn's, though—her voice is just right!

Though she's acted in films, Bryn thinks doing cartoons is more fun. "We always joke around!" the Canadian girl says. But when your voice has to sound perfect, one thing *isn't* funny, says Bryn—catching a cold!

Bryn thinks Gina would make a great friend. "She seems like a nice person who would get you out of trouble!"



AG

POLL



Your answers:

In our November/December 2000 issue, we asked if you'd pay more for a recycled item. Most of you would spend at least a little more to help the planet. Claire Rybak, age 8, of Pennsylvania would. "I don't want our world to be a trash dump!" she says.



Next question:

Would you rather help plan your own birthday party or have it be a surprise? Check one.

- ☐ Ooooh! I love surprises!
- ☐ I want to help plan it. I like being in on the fun!

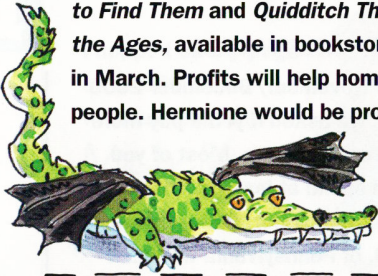
Tell us why you chose your answer.



Cut out your answers and mail them to us with your name, address, and birth date.

Harry's Handbooks

Now you can buy two Hogwarts textbooks! Author J.K. Rowling has written *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Quidditch Through the Ages*, available in bookstores in March. Profits will help homeless people. Hermione would be proud!



Help Wanted!

What's good—and bad—about your place in the family? Is the eldest sibling always the boss? Does the baby of the family get away with more? What are the ups and downs of hand-me-downs? Does an "only" get lonely? Send a letter to the address on page 2. Include your name, address, and birth date.



Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



April Fools!



"Our teacher showed us a glass jar with dark things bobbing up and down inside. She said they were bugs in a special liquid. Then another teacher came in our room, coughing. She picked up the bug jar and pretended to take a drink. We all screamed! Then our teacher wrote on the board, 'April Fools!' The 'bugs' were really raisins in 7-Up!"

Lisa Ferris
Age 10, California



"My friend Melanie cut holes in an old white sock and wrote 'Get Well Soon' on it. Then she put the sock on her arm so that it looked like a cast. When I asked, 'How did you break your arm?' she laughed and said, 'April Fools!'"

Kirstyn Hoffman
Age 10, Florida

"My brother switched the bags inside the cereal boxes. When I sleepily poured the box of Cap'n Crunch, out came Wheaties!"

Lynn Tulloch
Age 10, Michigan



We asked you for your funniest April Fools' Day tricks.



These playful pranks sure made us laugh!



"At school, my friend Carol and I taped a piece of fishing line to a dollar bill and left the money on a boy's chair. Then I asked him, 'Is that your money, or can I have it?' He ran to his chair. Just as he was about to pick up the bill, Carol pulled the string and we both yelled, 'April Fools!' Everyone laughed—even the boy!"

Alexia Diorio
Age 11, Washington

"Here's an easy trick: Crumple up two pieces of paper and stick them inside someone's shoes. Shove the paper down to the toes. The shoes won't fit when the person tries to put them on!"

Allison Young
Age 12, Montana
Nicole Young
Age 6, Montana



"I showed my mom my Beanie Baby collection with my hamster hidden in the middle. She didn't notice—until he moved!"

Stephanie Simmons
Age 10, Virginia



"Our orchestra concert was on April 1. As usual, our teacher put her hands up for us to start. Instead of playing the song we were supposed to, we all played 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.' The teacher laughed, and so did our parents!"

Amy Rosenthal
Age 10, Missouri



New Contest: Traveling Teddies

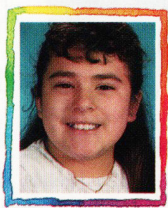
Is your family planning a trip? Bring along a stowaway—a teddy bear! Snap a photo of your bear in an unusual spot. Maybe your bear is hiking in the Grand Canyon, ready to ride a roller coaster, or even standing guard at Buckingham Palace! Send your photo with a brief description of where you went to the address on page 2. Deadline: April 15.

Sorry, but we can't return photos.

The winners will appear in our September/October 2001 issue.

Heart to Heart Being Different

Are you different from other girls?
How do you handle the teasing that
often comes with being unique?



Because I'm in a wheelchair, kids say, "You're lucky you can't take the stairs" or "It's great you don't take PE." Stuff like that hurts. They don't realize how tough it is. If you're different, don't pretend to be "normal." Just be happy with who you are.

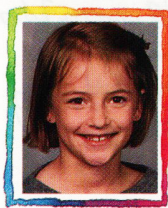
Amanda Valley
Age 12, Kentucky



I'm a bigger size than most girls I know. But in the pool, it's harder to notice my size, so I feel better about myself. When people call me names, I think of that girl in the pool, and she gives me strength.

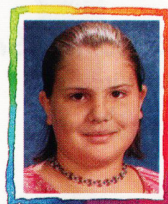


Shelley Smith
Age 12, Colorado



After I got glasses, kids called me "four eyes." Worse than the name-calling was when everyone would turn to stare at me! Finally a friend said, "Four eyes are better than two!" She made me feel better.

Bobbi Larmer
Age 10, Colorado



I have dyslexia, a learning disability that causes me to mix up my letters. It makes school hard, so some kids tease me. But I'm able to handle the teasing because my friends *always* stand by me. They know I have to work harder than other kids. If I'm upset, they remind me that they like me for just being me.

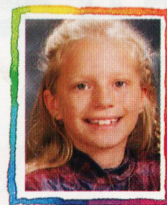
Tarra Elsayed
Age 10, Florida



I'm in band and choir and I like to dress differently than other girls. I get teased a lot, but I don't let that scare me away from the things I like to do. In 30 years, it won't matter if I was teased because of what I wore or how I looked.

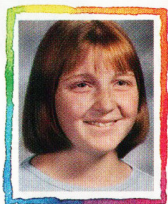
What will matter is the knowledge I have and how I've used it!

Ryann Overhise
Age 12, New York



I don't wear name-brand clothes, so girls make fun of me. But you know what? It doesn't matter. I don't have to wear the best clothes to be the best in school—or in life!

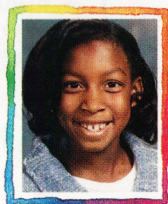
Taylore Swets
Age 9, North Carolina



When I was little, my mom died. I think kids teased

me because they weren't sure how to act around me. Then a classmate's dad died, and I helped her get through it, but I remember thinking, "Don't tease someone because she's different. Someday, you may be different yourself."

Jessica Bonarwar
Age 11, Oregon



Kids used to tease me about my asthma. When

I asked them why, it turned out they thought asthma was contagious! Maybe sometimes when people tease, they're just afraid.

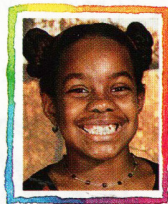
Noelle Montgomery
Age 12, California



I have freckles, so kids call me names. It hurt

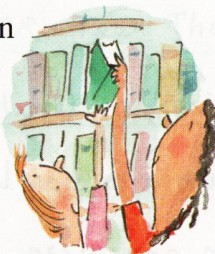
until my mom said, "A face without freckles is like a night sky without stars."

Amy McPherson
Age 11, California

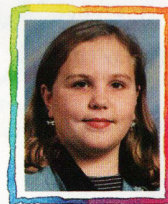


I'm the tallest kid in my class, but it doesn't bother

me. I can help out shorter kids and feel like a big sister to younger kids. I don't let the differences on the outside change who I am on the inside!



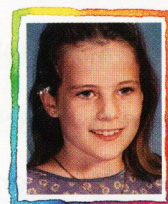
Maya Peterson
Age 8, New Jersey



I've developed faster than most girls, so I get a lot

of taunting. I think people pick on me because they have low self-esteem. To make themselves feel better, they tease. I refuse to stoop to that level.

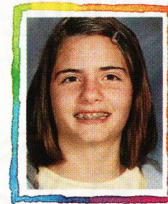
Lily Dancy-Jones
Age 12, North Carolina



I'm shy, so some kids make fun of me or, worse,

leave me out of games. I have to force myself to do things that are hard to do. I just tell myself, "Everything will be fine." And it usually is!

Tara Ashley Parker
Age 10, Alabama



When people look through a clover patch, they aren't

searching for three-leaf clovers—they're hunting for four-leaf clovers. They want ones that are different from the rest. It's our differences that make us special!

Hellen Welserpal
Age 13, Illinois

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Obsessions. Do you love something so much you need to do it all the time? Play a sport? Read? Paint? Has the obsession helped you improve a skill, or has it interfered with important things? How do you deal with it? How do others around you deal with it?

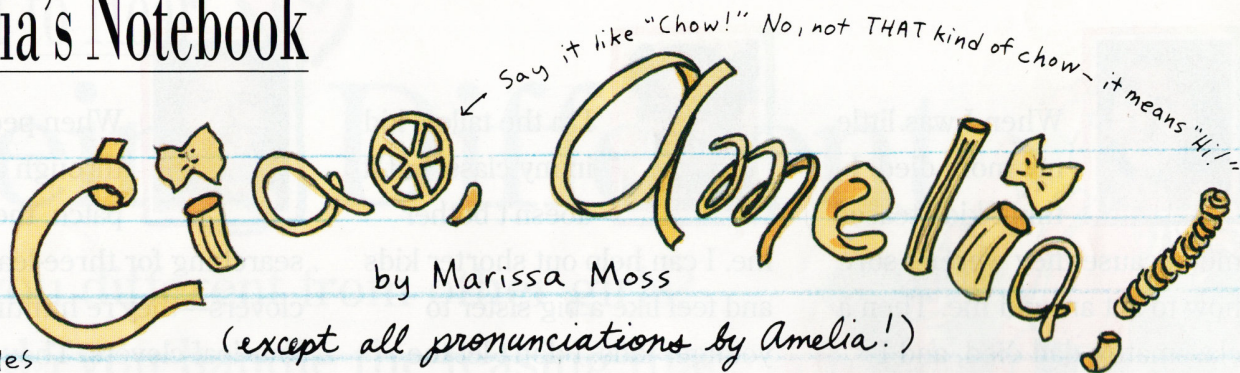
**Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to: AmericanGirl
8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.**

Deadline: April 7, 2001

Some answers will appear in the September/October 2001 issue. ★



Amelia's Notebook



by Marissa Moss

(except all pronunciations by Amelia!)

Oodles of Noodle Doodles

March 5

Carly, Maya, and I joined the Italian club at school because we thought it'd be fun to learn a foreign language and eat lots of pizza.

So far we haven't eaten any pizza, but I'm learning some words.

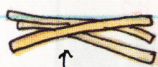
Pasta tasted better before I knew what the names meant.



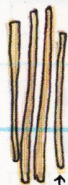
"Orecchiette" means little ears. (Dig in to those ears!)



"Farfalle" means butterflies. ("Bow-tie noodles" is more appetizing.)



"Vermicelli" means little worms. (Yucch!)



"Spaghetti" means little strings. (Tasty, eh?)



"Linguine" means little tongues. (Blech!)

When Ms. Tufarelli speaks Italian, it sounds so beautiful.



Buon giorno, ragazzi! Come state? *

* "Hello, kids! How are you?"

When I speak Italian, it sounds like gibberish.



I like-o speak-o Italiano. Uno piccolo biggolo something-O. *

* Adding an "O" doesn't make a word Italian, but it sounds better.

March 12

Italian is crazy! There are different words for "the" depending on whether the thing you're talking about is considered "masculine" or "feminine."

But how can a factory be female and a book be male? Why is melon a boy but pear a girl?

March 19

Ms. Tufarelli says that at the end of the month, we're going to an Italian restaurant. We'll have to read an Italian menu, order our food in Italian, and try to talk to each other only in Italian. (Our conversations will be very short!) Carly, Maya, and I are practicing all the food vocabulary we can think of.

Words to be avoided:

il fegato (liver)



i spinaci (spinach)



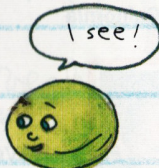
la melanzana (eggplant)



i ceci (beans)

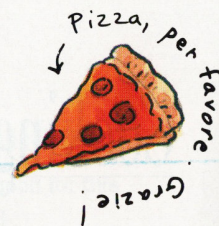


You can tell I'm a girl because I have eyelashes.





"Per favore" (Pear fah-VOR-ay) means please.
"Grazie" (GRAH-tsyeh) means thank you.
"Delizioso" (DAY-lee-tsee-oh-zo) means yummy!



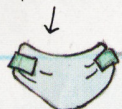
March 28

Well, yesterday we went to "Il Buon Forno" (The Good Oven), and it wasn't like when Ms. Tufarelli speaks Italian at all! The waiter spoke so quickly he sounded like a tape on *FAST FORWARD*. The only words I understood were



↑
Sandwich
is
"panino."

What I
said was
"pannolino."



↑
diaper -
NOT
edible!

"Buona sera" (Good evening). After that, I was lost! I did my best anyway and ordered a sandwich. The waiter burst out laughing, and Ms. Tufarelli explained I'd just asked for a diaper!

My face was so
red, I wanted to
sink under the
table!



I just should have asked
for spaghetti, but the only
kind they had was made
of spinach! At least I knew
that word.

I wasn't the only one to make a mistake. For dessert Carly asked for "gelato al pesce," more words I knew.

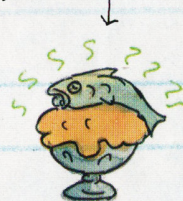
When I told her she'd
ordered fish ice cream,
she couldn't stop laughing!
She really wanted
"gelato alla pesca" -
peach ice cream.



I had to laugh
with her!



sardine sundae



At least I knew what flavor I wanted - plain old chocolate. It sounds the same in both languages. Plus it's the one time you can add an "o" to an English word and get the Italian one.

"gelato al chocolate-o"
or "cioccolato"



Either way it's
"delizioso!"

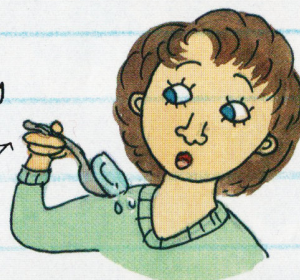
Even if I make some mistakes,

learning Italian is fun. Who knows, maybe someday

I'll meet an Italian girl and teach her to say

"soup" instead of "soap"! ★

spoonful of suds



Is this
what I
ordered?

Cooking

Foolish Food

Is it dinner—or dessert? Play an April Fools' joke on your friends by serving this funny food!





Jiggly Juice

You'll need a spoon for this deceptive drink!

You will need:



An adult to help you

- 1 box (3 ounces) red Jell-O
- 2 (10-ounce or larger) clear plastic cups
- 2 straws



Ask an adult to prepare Jell-O in a bowl following directions on box. Pour liquid Jell-O into cups. Stick a straw in each cup and place in refrigerator to set overnight.

Pizza Pie

Mama mia! It's a pie in disguise!

You will need:



An adult to help you

- 1 unbaked piecrust
- Green Dots candies
- 1 red Fruit Roll-Up
- ½ cup shredded coconut
- Yellow food coloring
- 1 small jar red jelly



1 Place piecrust on a baking sheet. Fold edge of dough under all the way around to look like pizza crust. Ask an adult to bake crust following directions on package. Let cool.

2 Use a butter knife to cut Dots into pieces to look like peppers. Wash a pair of scissors and cut Fruit Roll-Up into circles to look like pepperoni. Put coconut into a zipper bag, add a drop of food coloring, close, and shake.

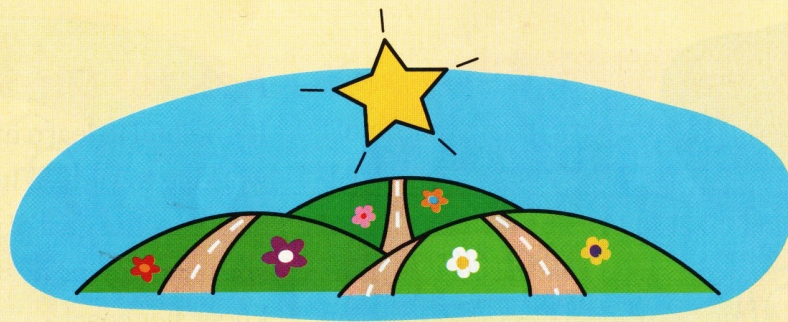
3 Spread jelly on crust. Sprinkle on coconut and candy pieces. Place Fruit Roll-Up circles on top. Cut into wedges and serve immediately. ★



Watch it! The Jell-O may slip out if you hold it like this—then the joke will be on you!





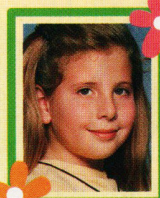


You know what you want. The tricky part is figuring out how to get it. Learn how from girls who've found the way to . . .

Make It Happen!

Choose a Path

First things first. You need to decide exactly where you want to go before you can get going! That's what pet lover

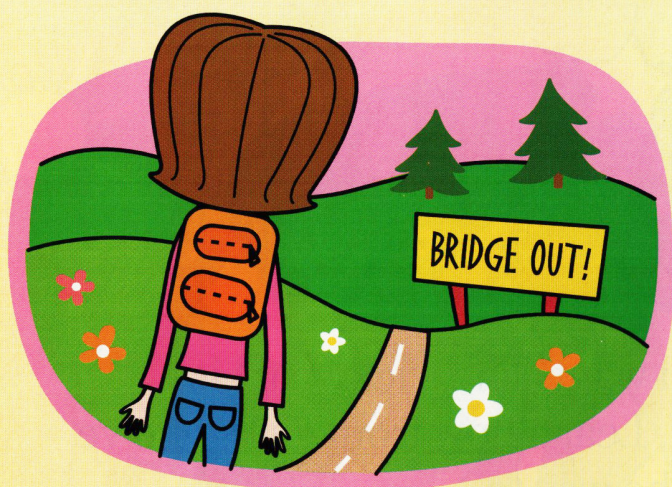


Emily Bennett did. Emily, 10, wanted to help animals, but she wasn't sure how. Then she remembered how sad and worried she was when she lost her pet cat. That gave her an idea about how she could help. Emily decided she would create a Web site that reunites pet owners and their lost pets.

With her dad, Emily put together a great site: www.purplepets.com. Now the site helps pet owners find their furry friends in her North Carolina hometown and all across the country!

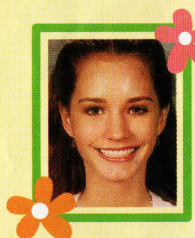


When you set your goal, write it down and post it where you'll see it often, or come up with another way to keep your goal in mind. Emily is reminded of her goal—helping lost pets find their owners—whenever she answers the many thankful e-mails her site receives.



Plan for Rough Roads

Think about why you haven't already achieved your goal. Be honest! Make a list of the reasons. Your list will show you some of the roadblocks you'll run into as you try to get what you want. Erica Glenn, 14, learned all about roadblocks when she set the goal of winning a leading part in a play.



Erica loved performing in local community theater. But the plays put on in her town didn't usually feature strong roles for girls her age. Erica came up with a creative solution to her problem: she wrote her own musical play with great roles for older girls! Erica based her musical on her favorite book, *Dancing Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild. Writing the play was a huge task in itself. "I never would have guessed how many revisions I'd have to do or how many obstacles I'd have to get around," says Erica. She went through four or five drafts of her script and music. In the end, though, two local theaters put on Erica's play. She won a starring role both times!

Follow Erica's lead and brainstorm ways to overcome the roadblocks that stand between you and your own goal. You'll be taking a huge step on the path to success.

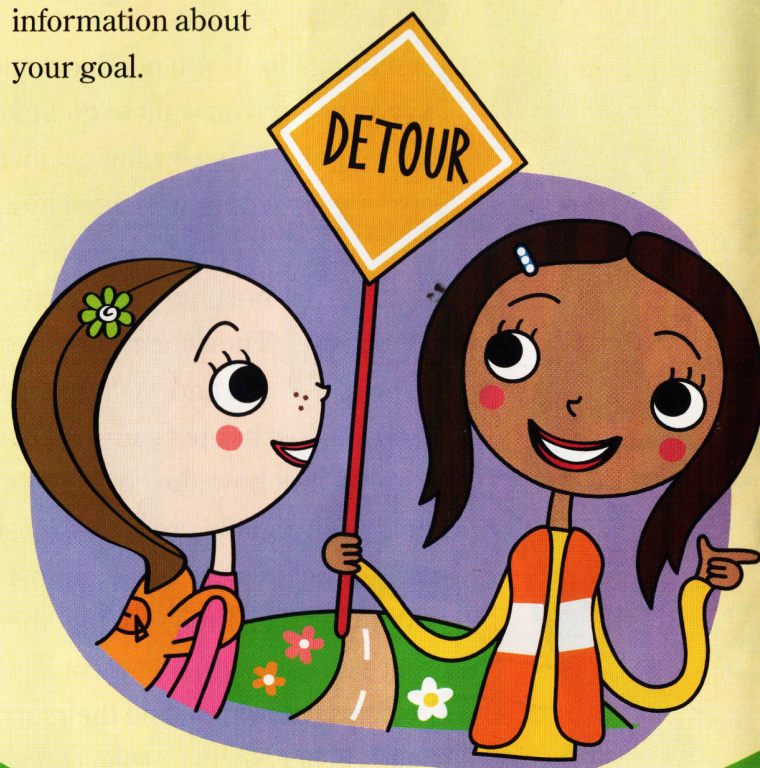
Ask for Directions

It's helpful to learn more about the goal you're working toward. When swimmer Madeline Smith, age 9, set the goal of mastering the breaststroke, she talked to the best breaststroke swimmer she knew: her coach.



Breaststroke is a particularly tough stroke. The first time Madeline swam the stroke at a meet, she was disqualified! "I got the arm stroke wrong, and I came in last place," she explains. Madeline got some one-on-one help from her coach, and her stroke really improved. She won a gold medal in breaststroke at the season's championship meet!

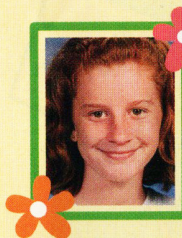
Sometimes it's hard to find someone who can help with your goal. Not everyone has a great coach ready and willing to offer advice. If you don't know anyone—an adult or a kid—who has already accomplished the goal you're working toward, ask a librarian to help you find more information about your goal.





Take Small Steps

Break down the route to your goal by thinking of it as lots of short "trips." If you do, getting where you want to go will seem a lot easier. Melissa Davis knows all about taking small steps toward her big goal: skating in the Olympics.



Melissa, age 11, has dreamed of competing in the Winter Olympics since she first started to skate at age eight. "I loved skating the minute I got out on the ice," Melissa explains.

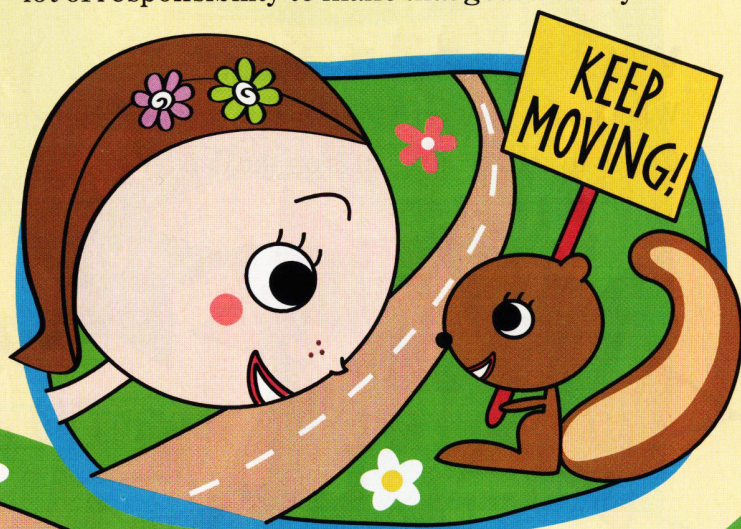
"It felt natural to skate." But Melissa didn't win the first competitions she skated in, and she felt discouraged. The California girl didn't give up on her dream, though. "I thought I just needed more practice," she says. Melissa set a goal of practicing skating three times a week. To improve her skating skills, she sets other small, specific goals, like learning new moves. Now she can do many spins and jumps. Melissa still dreams about the Olympics, but she knows she has a long way to go. Each time she achieves a small goal, she's one step closer to her dream.

Keep Moving

How long is the journey toward your goal? That depends on what you want and what you're willing to do to get it. Danielle Shimotakahara, 13, has worked hard for nearly two years to reach her goal: keeping violent video games away from kids.



When Danielle heard about the terrible school shooting in Littleton, Colorado, she decided to do something to help prevent violence among kids in her own Oregon community. She started a campaign to get violent video games removed from businesses where kids spend a lot of time, such as pizza parlors and bowling alleys. First, she researched the ways violent video games affect kids. Then she collected thousands of signatures on petitions asking for the removal of violent games. She even presented her plan to members of Congress! Danielle's campaign has been a great success. She has convinced many businesses to get rid of violent games, and she's still hard at work. Danielle made a tremendous commitment to her goal, and she has taken on a lot of responsibility to make that goal a reality.





Reach Your Goal

Achieving a goal takes time and hard work.

If your goal isn't the most important thing in your life, that's fine. But the more important it is, the more likely you are to reach it.

Decide how important your goal is and what you're willing to give up to work on it. Are you willing to watch less TV to spend time on your goal? Are you willing to miss time with friends?

Remember, achieving any goal, no matter how small or how large, is an accomplishment to be proud of. When you finally get to your goal, you'll know it was worth the long trip!

What You Really Want

What goals do AG readers want to achieve? Here are some of their top answers.

Check to see if your goal is on the list!



Your ROAD MAP

Ready to start working toward your goal? Just fill out this personalized road map to figure out what path you should take.

MY GOAL

Roadblocks and how I'll get past them:

DETOUR

BRIDGE OUT!

KEEP MOVING!

Steps I'll take to achieve my goal:

Who can help me and how they can help:

How long and how often I'll work on my goal:

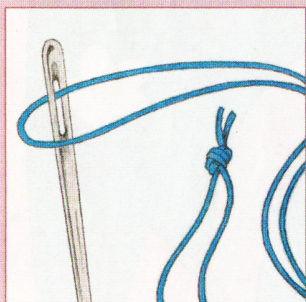
Craft

Tote your treasures
or give a gift in a little bag
you make yourself!

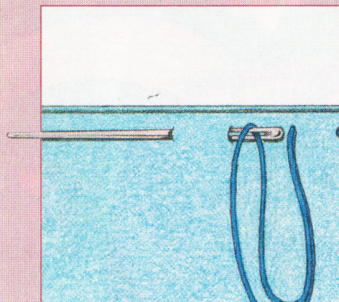
Bitty Bags



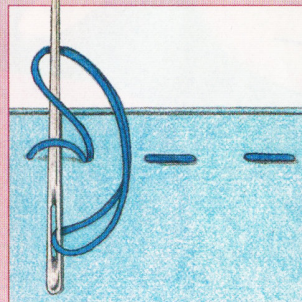
Sew Easy! Stitching tips to get you started



Threading needle: Pass 24-inch piece of **thread** through **needle**. Make ends even. Tie knot.



Straight stitch: Send point of needle down through both pieces of fabric and back up before pulling thread through.



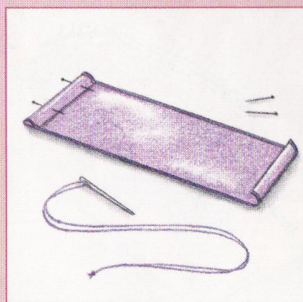
Knot: Push needle down through fabric. Bring needle back up at start of stitch. To knot, slide needle under stitch and loop thread around as shown. Pull tight. Repeat knot.

Tip Tiny stitches look best, but they also take lots of practice. Try sewing a scrap of cloth or ribbon before you start your project.

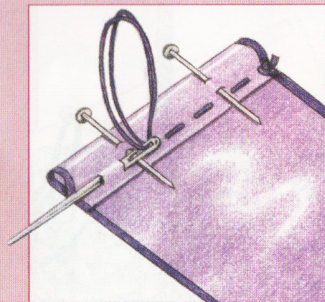




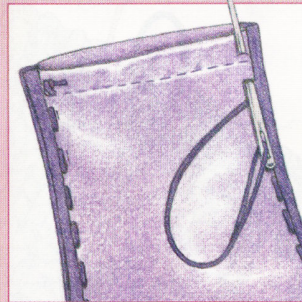
Little Luxury Turn a scrap of ribbon into a dainty bag.



1 Start with 8-inch piece of **2½-inch-wide (or wider) wire ribbon**. Lay ribbon flat on table, and fold in each cut edge ¼ inch as shown. Keep edges in place with **pins**.



2 Straight stitch along one edge as shown. Knot thread and trim ends with **scissors**. Repeat along other edge. Remove pins.



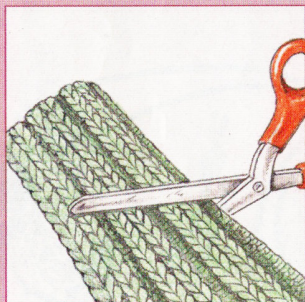
3 Fold ribbon in half, with right side out. Straight stitch one side close to wire. Knot thread and trim ends. Repeat along other side. Sew on **thin ribbon or cord strap**.

Tip Use **beads** for extra sparkle! Add a small bead on each stitch, or use **beading thread** to sew on a string of beads for a handle.

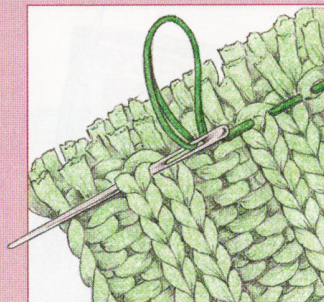




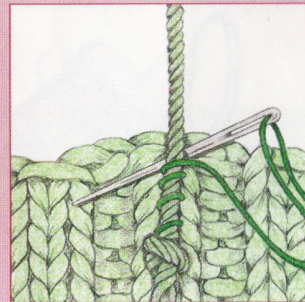
Knit Knapsack Recycle the sleeve of a worn-out sweater into a cute carryall.



1 Use **scissors** to cut 6-inch end piece off sleeve of old **sweater** (ask an adult for permission first!). Turn piece inside out.



2 Straight stitch along cut edge, about an inch from edge. Knot thread and trim ends. Optional: stitch across again for stronger seam.



3 Knot ends of **cord**, and sew to sides of bag to make handle. Turn right-side out. Optional: add string of **beads**.

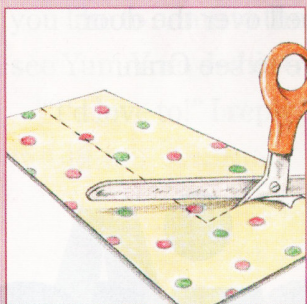
Tip If you don't have an old sweater, try using the sleeve of a **knit shirt** or **sweatshirt** instead.



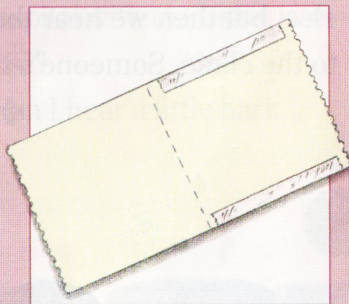


Paper Pouch

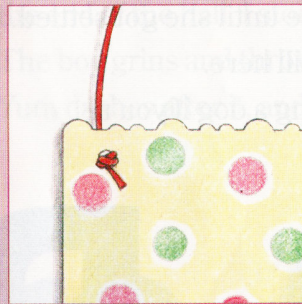
Make the prettiest paper bag you've ever seen!



1 Cover the patterned side of a piece of **wrapping paper** with **clear Contact paper**. Cut strip with **scissors**.



2 Fold strip in half. Trim top with **craft scissors**. Unfold strip. Press **double-sided tape** halfway along each side as shown.



3 Refold strip to make bag. Use **hole punch** to make holes at top, and tie **cord** through to make strap.



Tip Recycle used wrapping paper to make bags like these. Try pretty **scrapbook paper**, too! ★

"Ewww! Gross!"

I turn around. Uh-oh. Not again! My puppy, Sneakers, has left a little "present" under the table. And my cousin Maggie just put her foot in it.

"Zoh-eee!" Maggie groans. She pulls off her sneaker and cleans it off. "Did you forget to take Sneakers out again?"

"I was going to," I explain, "as soon as I made breakfast."

Maggie scowls. "Don't you get it, Zoe? A dog needs to go out first thing—especially a puppy."

Our grandmother, Dr. J.J. MacKenzie, comes in from her office—the Wild at Heart veterinary clinic next door—just in time to hear.

"Maggie," she says firmly, "your cereal's getting soggy."

Then Gran turns to me. "Zoe, Sneakers is nearly six months old, but his behavior's not improving."

"Sorry, Gran," I say. "I promise I'll do better—"

"Don't promise *Gran*," Maggie says. "Promise poor Sneakers!"

"It's not fair," I say. "I try, but Sneakers just doesn't listen. Couldn't we hire someone to train him? That's what they do back home."

"Back home" is New York City. My mom is an actress. When her soap opera was canceled, she moved to L.A. But she wanted me to stay with Gran and my cousin Maggie until she got settled. Now it's summer, and I'm still here.

"What's the point of having a dog if you're



Illustrations: Dan Brown

gonna *pay* somebody else to look after it?" Maggie argues. "It's ridiculous."

"It is not—"

Gran holds up her hands between us like a referee at a boxing match. "All right, girls. That's enough." She starts to say something else, but then we hear the bell over the door to the clinic. Someone's here to see Gran.



Begin

Laurie Halse Anderson

Sneakers is such a rascal! He won't behave—no matter what. Why can't he be a good dog like Yum-Yum?

After breakfast, I look for Sneakers, but I can't find him anywhere. Frustrated, I give up and hurry through the door that leads into Gran's clinic, where I volunteer.

I love this place. One thing I've learned about animals is that they don't care where you're from or what kind of clothes you wear. They love you for who you are.

The bell over the door rings again. I look up and see my favorite client.

"Yum-Yum!" I exclaim. I scoop the cute black-and-white shih tzu into my arms.

"He's having a bad-hair day—and he's got a big date!" jokes his owner, Jane Young.

I laugh, and Yum-Yum licks my face.

"We're going on a therapy visit to the kids' cancer ward at the hospital today," Jane explains. "You know, just to cheer them up a little. Can you groom him right now?"

"Sure," I say, and take Yum-Yum and Jane back into the grooming area. Some animals hate to be washed and groomed, but Yum-Yum loves it. He doesn't fuss at all.

As I'm finishing up, Jane asks, "Say, how would you like to come to the hospital with me today and see Yum-Yum do his tricks?"

"I'd love to!" I reply. Then I hear a little bark

and look down at my feet. Sneakers has snuck into the clinic—and is peeing on the floor!

"I've just got one more thing to do before I go," I tell Jane, pointing down at the puddle.



As we pull into the hospital parking lot, a weird feeling creeps over me. I've never visited anybody in the hospital. I pick up Yum-Yum and carry him inside.

While Jane checks in at the nurses' desk, I peek into the nearest room. There's a girl about my age in bed watching cartoons—and she's totally bald! I've heard that chemotherapy—the drugs they give people to try to cure cancer—can make people lose their hair. But I've never actually seen anybody it's happened to. I suddenly feel very conspicuous with my blond hair streaming down below my shoulders.

I'm speechless. What do you say to a girl without any hair? Then I feel an arm slip around my shoulders. "Don't worry, Zoe," Jane says with a reassuring smile. "They're normal kids like you. They've just had some really rotten luck."

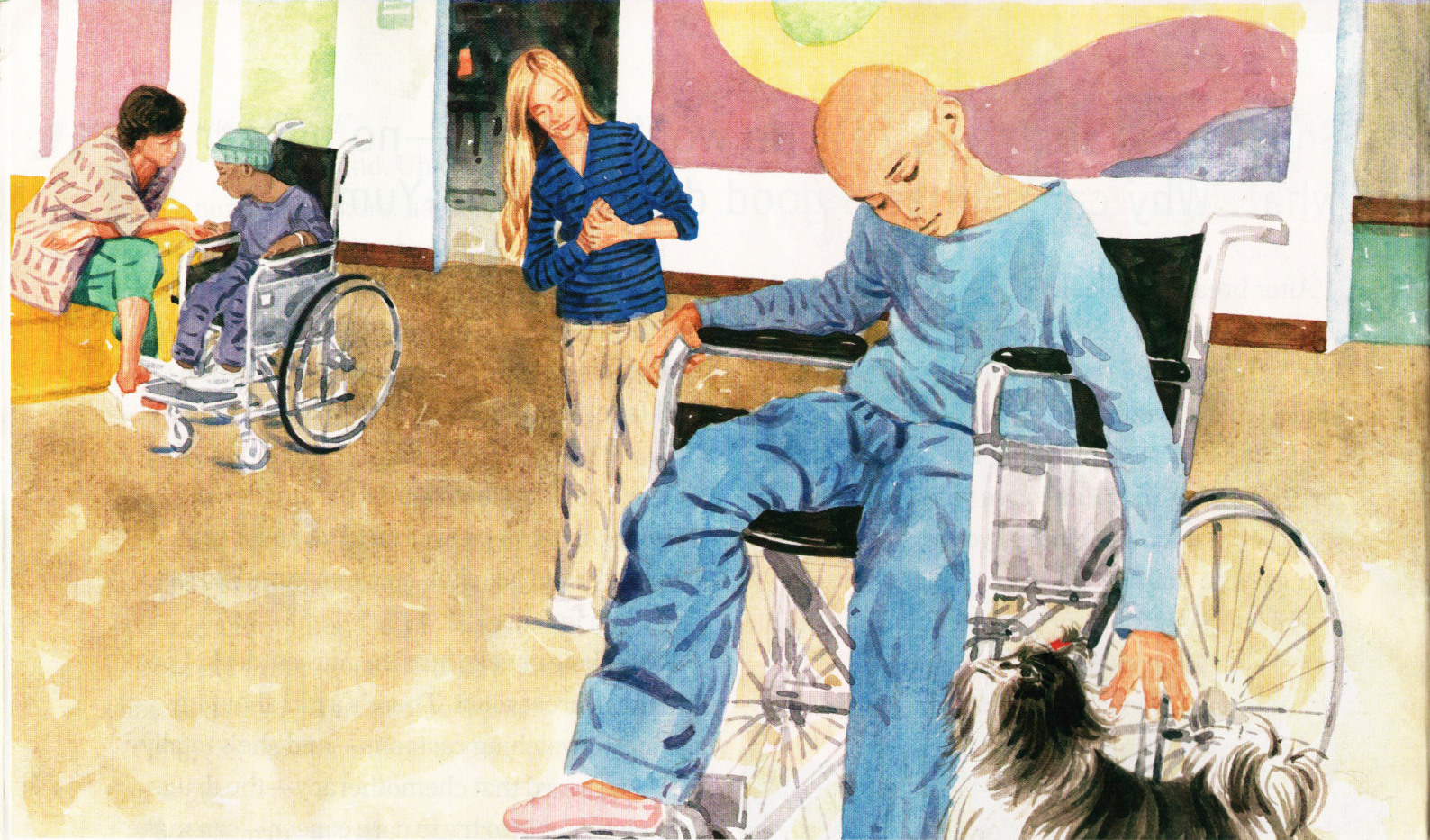
Suddenly Yum-Yum spots a tall, skinny boy at the end of the hall. I stoop down and let the dog go. The boy grins and throws a small red ball. Yum-Yum dashes after it, and kids come out of their

Again

Adapted from

Say Good-Bye: *Wild at Heart* Book 5





rooms, squealing and calling out his name. Normal kid sounds. Not what I expected in a hospital.

I follow Jane and Yum-Yum down to the lounge. Kids of all ages gather around. Some have hair, some don't. Some look okay. Some look really ill. But they all smile at the sight of Yum-Yum.

The boy whistles softly and claps his hands. "Yum-Yum! Come!" He gets Yum-Yum to do all kinds of tricks—sit, lie down, roll over, even shake hands! The kids clap and cheer as if they are at the circus.

"Yum-Yum's amazing! I wish Sneakers could do tricks like that," I say to Jane. "How did you teach him?"

Jane chuckles. "I held treats in front of him to teach him how to stand on his legs, and he learned a lot of tricks from the kids here. But remember, Yum-Yum's nearly thirteen. He's had years of practice."

Suddenly, Yum-Yum takes off for a corner of the room. A girl is sitting there in a wheelchair with

her back to the others, staring out the window. Yum-Yum sits up by her slippers. She doesn't move. It's like she doesn't even see him.

"What's wrong with that girl?" I quietly ask Jane.

Jane sighs. "Her name's Emma Morgan. The nurses say she's having a really hard time of it. She never talks much."

As I go over to get Yum-Yum, I see the girl's face reflected in the window. She's looking at me—and my hair. Her brown eyes are large, beautiful... and hopeless.

Slowly, shyly, she reaches out to stroke Yum-Yum's soft fur. And when Yum-Yum barks and wags his little tail, Emma actually smiles. It's like the sun coming out on a cloudy day.

I can see why, in spite of the sadness, Jane likes to come here.



When we step out of the hospital, the sun seems to be shining brighter. Or maybe I'm just looking at everything a little bit differently.

As we drive away, I smile down at Yum-Yum on my lap. I notice something around his mouth.

"Do you have a tissue, Jane? I think one of the kids slipped Yum-Yum a messy treat."

"Sure." Keeping her eyes on the road, she hands me a tissue from her purse.

I use it to wipe gently around Yum-Yum's mouth. "There you go—" I stop when I look at the tissue. It has a small streak of something red on it. It looks like blood. Is Yum-Yum hurt?

"Jane, look," I say when we stop at a light.

"What?" She frowns, puzzled by the tissue.

"Do you think Yum-Yum hurt his mouth?"

"Maybe." She lifts Yum-Yum's chin with her finger. "Look here, little guy," she says, playfully stern. A light frown creases her brow. "I'm sure it's nothing."

"Yeah," I agree, but I feel a little nervous.



When we get back to the clinic, Jane asks Gran to take a look at Yum-Yum. Gran gently opens Yum-Yum's mouth and feels his teeth, as if she's checking for a loose tooth. She shines her light all around the inside of Yum-Yum's mouth. Her brow knots.

Then Gran steps back and runs a hand through her short white hair. When she looks up, I see it in her eyes. Something's wrong.

"Jane, I've found a few things," she says softly.

"What kind of things?" Jane asks, her voice rising. "He's going to be all right, isn't he, J.J.?"

"I need to do some tests before I can make a diagnosis," Gran replies.

After a few seconds, Jane says, "OK, J.J." She picks up Yum-Yum and buries her face in the small dog's hair. "Sweetie, what do you say? Want to have a sleepover with Dr. Mac and Zoe?"

Yum-Yum barks and wags his tail, and I smile in spite of my worried feelings.



The next morning I tiptoe into the clinic to check on Yum-Yum. I hear Gran and Jane in the exam room, and I stop to listen in.

"I'm sorry, Jane," says Gran, "but the test results confirm what I suspected. Yum-Yum has cancer."

"No!" I cry, bursting in. Gran looks up, surprised.

"I can't believe it," Jane says tearfully. She looks up at Gran, a stricken look on her face. "Did I do something wrong, J.J.?"

"You've always taken wonderful care of Yum-Yum. We're taking better care of our dogs these days, so they live longer. As a result, dogs are at greater risk of developing cancer, and the symptoms are often hard to notice."

Jane takes a moment to absorb the news. Then her eyes flare with hope. "I want to do chemotherapy. I mean, they do that on dogs these days, right? I've seen it work wonders with the kids at the hospital," Jane insists. Gran nods. Jane studies the floor. "I don't care how much it costs, J.J. Not if it will save Yum-Yum."

Gran slips an arm around Jane's shoulder. When she speaks, her voice is gentle, but firm. "Jane, you



Yum-Yum is one of the best dogs in the whole world, and now this has to happen to him. It's so unfair!

have to understand. Nothing will save Yum-Yum."

Jane has her face in her hands, crying softly. I offer her a tissue. I don't know what else to do. I swallow hard, then slip out of the office and scoot down the hall to where Yum-Yum has been sleeping in a cage.

He wags his tail when he sees me. "Hello, Yum-Yum," I say cheerfully. Poor guy! He's one of the best dogs in the whole world. He doesn't just make Jane's life happier. He makes those kids at the hospital laugh and forget their troubles. He really makes a difference. And now this has to happen to him. It's so unfair!

And suddenly I understand the look I saw in Emma Morgan's eyes.



A few days later, Sneakers and I pass by Jane's beauty salon while out for a walk. Jane is just leaving the salon to take Yum-Yum to the hospital so that the kids can say good-bye to him. He started chemo yesterday and won't be doing therapy visits for a while.

"Why don't you and Sneakers come along to the hospital with us?" Jane suggests.

"Sneakers?" I say in disbelief. "You've got to be kidding!"

Jane laughs. "Yes, Sneakers. I think he has real potential. Normally you have to take a dog through a training program before he's allowed to do therapy visits," Jane explains. "But I don't think anyone will mind, as long as I come. If you and Sneakers like it, you might decide to do formal training."

I'm not sure. I look at that rascal Sneakers and wonder if he can do it. If *I* can do it.

But then Sneakers barks, and the sound is so cheerful and full of life, I think: *Maybe he could do some good. Maybe he could even make Emma laugh.*

"Come on, Sneakers!" I say. "Let's give it a try!"



When we get to the hospital, kids stream out of their rooms to greet Yum-Yum. They've made him get-well cards and posters. They take turns holding him and talking to him about his treatment.

"I guess in some ways they feel even closer to him than before—since they're fighting the same disease," Jane says.

The kids are happy to meet Yum-Yum's good buddy Sneakers, too. I cross my fingers. So far, so good. It doesn't seem to bother Sneakers to have lots of kids petting him and trying to hug him.

I look for Emma Morgan. I want her to meet

Sneakers. I see her across the room. I wave and start to go over to her, but a little girl steps in front of me. "Can I make Sneakers' hair look pretty?" she asks.

I smile at the little girl. I remember being her age and playing with my hair, but of course she doesn't have any hair to play with. "Sure, you can," I reply.

The little girl takes a purple scrunchie and loops it over Sneakers' left ear. She slips a hot-pink one onto his tail. "Sneakers!" she squeals. "You're bee-yoo-ti-ful!"

Sneakers runs around in a circle, trying to catch the bright pink cloth on his tail.

The little girl chases him. Another little girl joins in the game.

Sneakers is getting excited. He jumps up on one of the nurses.

"Down, Sneakers!" I tell him.

But he won't listen. He runs up to the nurses' desk with kids chasing after him.

Oh, no! He's not going to—"No! Sneakers!"

Yes, he is. He pees right in the middle of the floor.

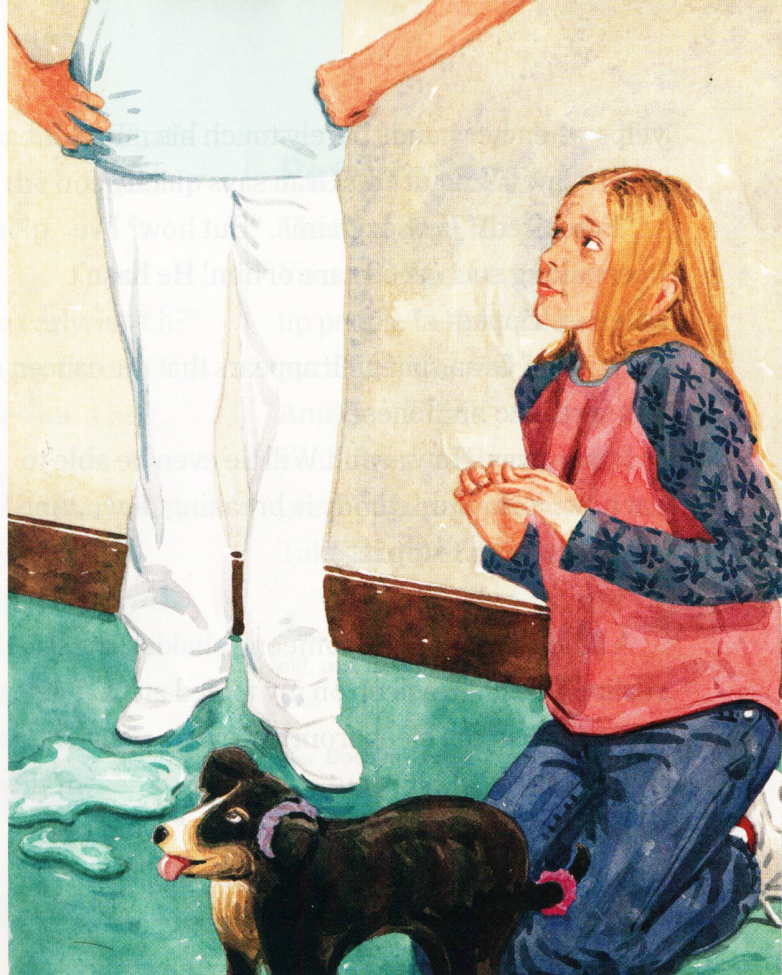
"I'm so sorry," I say to the nurse, and I can feel my face turning bright red. "Do you have any paper towels?"

She shakes her head. "I'll take care of it." She sighs and glances at Jane. "I think it would be best for you to take Sneakers outside."

I'm totally embarrassed. As Jane and I walk back to the car with our dogs, I apologize over and over.

"Don't be silly," she says. "He just got excited, that's all. But you see, that's why the special training is so important."

Jane is being so nice. But I feel humiliated. Sneakers and I aren't like Jane and Yum-Yum—we're a terrible team.



A week later, Sneakers wakes me up with his barking. I look at the clock. It's three A.M.! I drag myself out of bed and open the door. Sneakers darts out of the room.

"Guess he's really gotta go," I yawn.

I follow him downstairs. But he's not standing by the back door. He's pawing at the door leading into the clinic. The light's on. Gran must be in there. Emergency!

I open the door, and Sneakers scampers into the clinic. My heart skips a beat when I see who's there—Jane and Yum-Yum!

"What's wrong?" I ask.

Jane looks stricken. "Yum-Yum hasn't eaten in almost two days. Then tonight I noticed his jaw looked weird. A little while ago, I woke up to find him whimpering. J.J., can you help him?"

Gran rushes him into a treatment room. I stand near the door—too upset to help. Gran gently strokes the dog, examining him everywhere. He

yelps when her hands barely touch his muzzle.

"His jaw is fractured," Gran says quietly.

"Fractured!" Jane exclaims. "But how? I've been taking such good care of him! He hasn't fallen or tripped—"

"Jane..." Gran starts. "It appears that the cancer has spread to his bones."

I turn away. How awful! Will he even be able to eat now? Yum-Yum's body is breaking down. And all our love can't stop it.



A little later on, I feel someone shaking me. I realize I've fallen asleep on my folded arms. I get up and brush the sleep from my eyes.

"How is he?" I blurt out.

"Yum-Yum is resting comfortably," Gran tells me. "I gave him something for the pain."



Jane is sitting across from me on the waiting-room couch, and Sneakers is sitting next to her. "This is perfect therapy dog behavior," she says softly, rubbing the little dog's head. "Sneakers can sense who needs some comfort."

I'm surprised. "You mean, he can really tell what you're thinking?"

"Sure," Jane says. "I swear Yum-Yum reads my mind sometimes."

"You mean, like ESP and all that?" I ask.

Gran smiles. "Well, I don't know about that. But dogs are very tuned in to people. They can pick up on all kinds of little signals—expressions, body language, mood."

Jane sits there a moment, stroking Sneakers. Of course, Sneakers loves it. But I realize that the action seems to help Jane even more. A calmness comes over her.



"I think if Yum-Yum could talk," Jane whispers, "I think he'd say... it's time."

Gran nods.

"I love him so much—" Jane's voice breaks. Tears well up in Gran's eyes. "Enough to let him go," Jane finishes.

And then I know. They're going to put Yum-Yum to sleep.

"Can I go tell him good-bye?" I ask. Tears stream down my face. Gran nods. She and Jane let me go in alone.

I go over to the cage where Yum-Yum is dozing. I open the door and stroke his soft fur. I scratch behind his ears, just the way he likes it, and his eyes flutter open a little.

"Good-bye, Yum-Yum," I whisper. "I'll never forget you." I kiss his little head.



By the time the rest of the world is awake, I'm out in the yard, hard at work. I can hardly bear to think about Yum-Yum—it's too painful. So I throw myself into training Sneakers.

I've decided there's only one way to deal with my sadness. That's for me and Sneakers to continue Yum-Yum's work at the hospital. It will be like a tribute to his memory. Maybe that will help.

We start with "sit," then move on to "stay."

Maggie comes out onto the deck and yawns. "Kinda early, isn't it?"

"Actually, it's kind of late." The sadness wells up in my throat again, and I tell Maggie about Yum-Yum. Maggie gives me a hug. Then Sneakers trots up with a stick in his mouth.

"Give me the stick, Sneaky boy," I say. But he won't let go. He's so cute, I reach down and give him a hug.

Maggie clears her throat. "Can I make a suggestion?" I nod yes. "Praise him only when he does something right. Otherwise he's getting mixed signals and doesn't know what you want."

I turn to Sneakers, put my hand on the stick, and say, "Give." Sneakers still won't let go, but this time I resist petting him.

"That's a start," Maggie coaches. "Now keep it up while I go make us some breakfast."

It's finally sinking in: Sneakers isn't the only one who needs training. If we're going to be a team, I need a little training, too.

We begin again. ★



Meet the Author

Laurie Halse Anderson



I've always had pets, even though I'm allergic to them. My dog, Canute, rested at my feet while I wrote, and slept next to my bed. When he died, I stayed with him so he wouldn't be afraid. It was one of the hardest

days of my life. I keep his collar in my office so it feels like he is still with me.

To read more about Zoe and the kids who work at Dr. Mac's clinic, look for the Wild at Heart series.



Pet Project

Therapy dogs like Yum-Yum and Sneakers cheer up people in hospitals and nursing homes all over America. Think you and your dog would make a great pet-therapy team? Take this quiz to find out!

1. Is my dog at least one year old, and am I at least ten?

YES NO

2. Does my dog know basic commands, such as "sit," "stay," "lie down," and "come"?

YES NO

3. Does my dog really like to be around people?

YES NO

4. Does he stay calm when he walks through a crowd, meets a friendly stranger, or meets another dog?

YES NO

5. Is my dog comfortable being touched, hugged, and petted by people he doesn't know?

YES NO

6. Is he comfortable with loud voices and clumsy movements?

YES NO

7. Is he relaxed around moving equipment, such as wheelchairs or walkers?

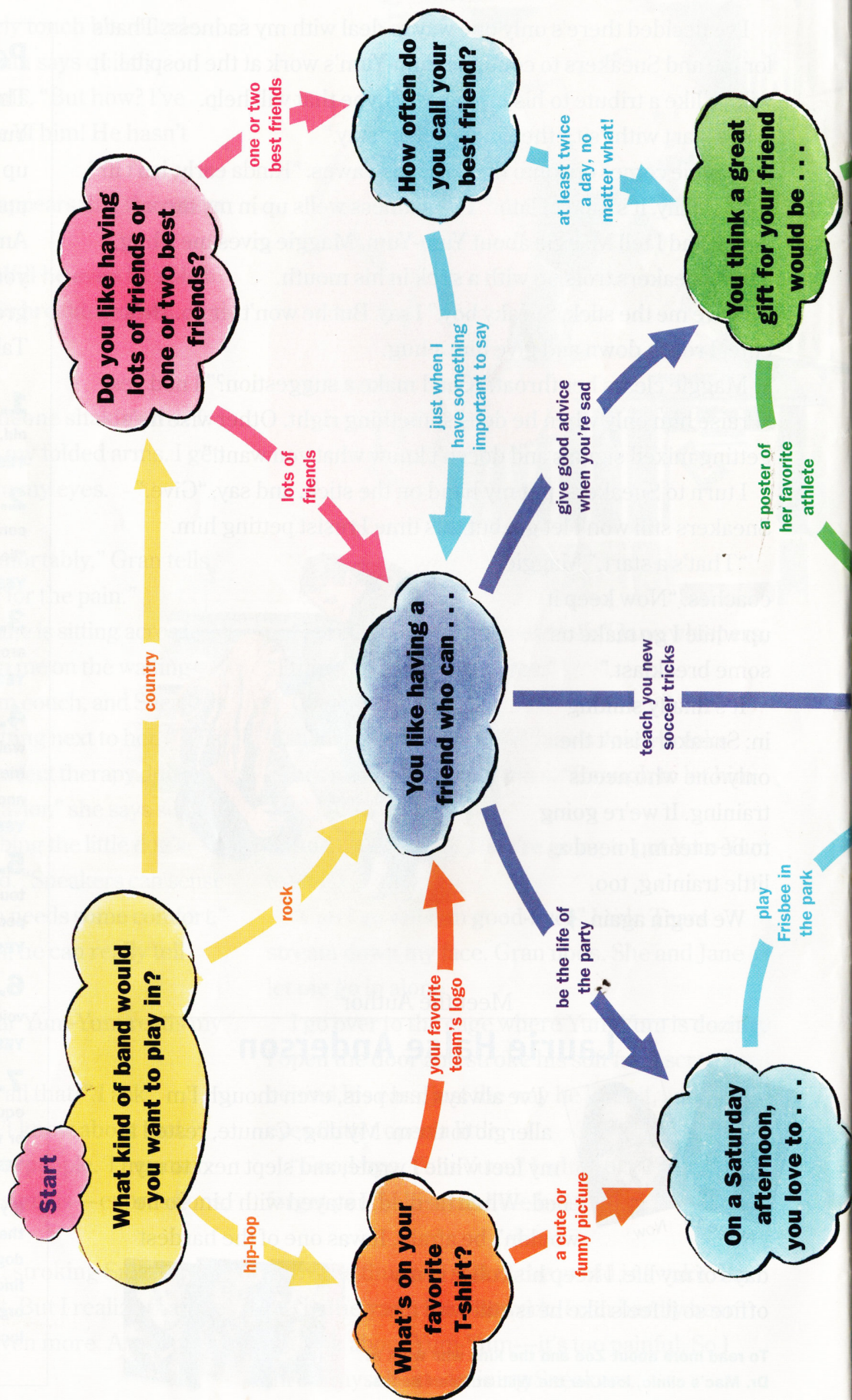
YES NO DON'T KNOW

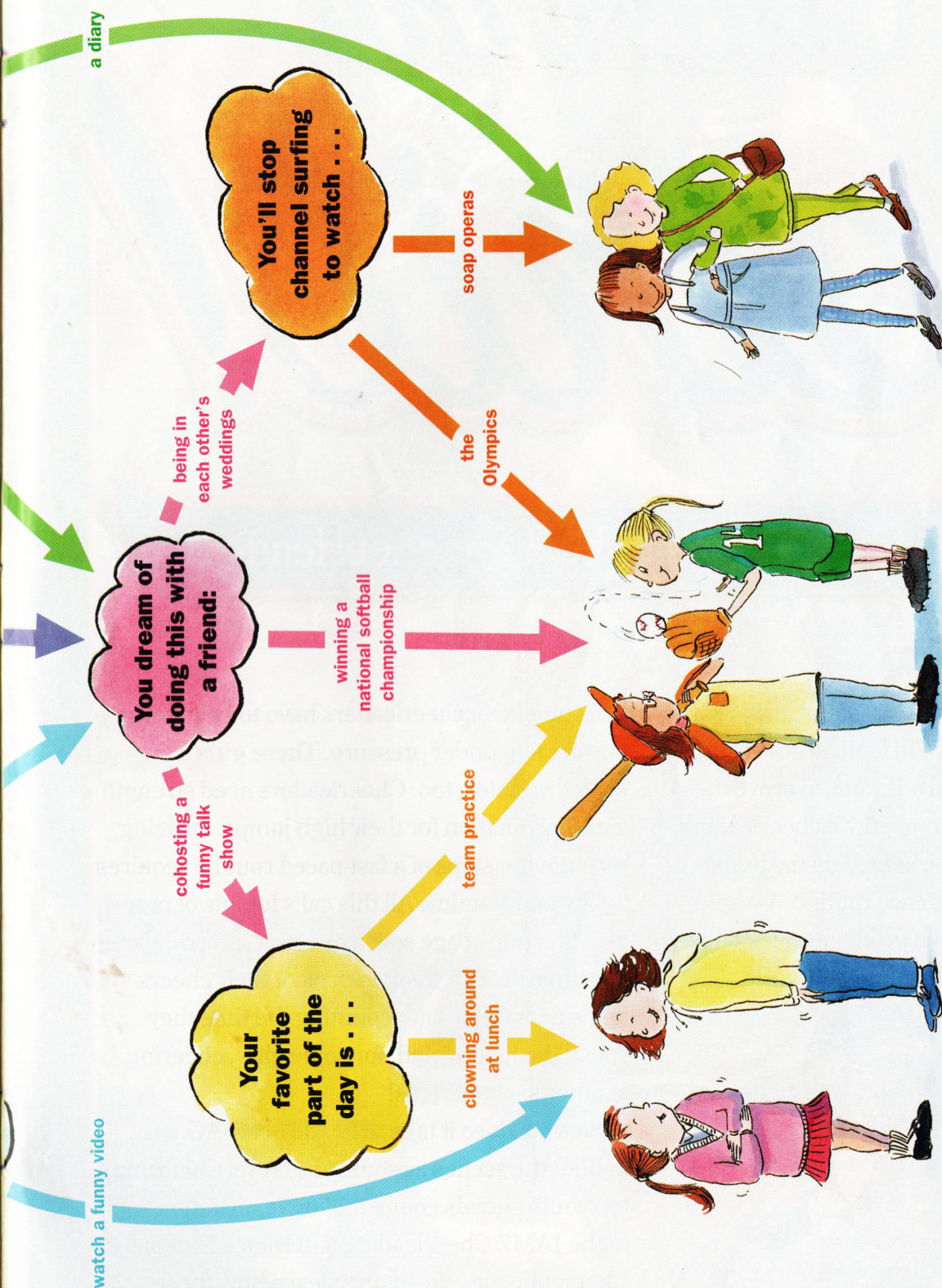
If you answered YES to most of these questions, you and your dog may be good candidates. To find the name of a pet-therapy organization near you, contact a local hospital or nursing home. ★

by Sarah Jane Brian

Pal Predictor

What can your choice of T-shirt say about your future friends?
Answer the questions below, and see if our **friend finder** works for you!





Giggle Gang

You love to laugh! Whether you're in a group or hanging out with one pal, you're usually drawn to funny, outgoing girls.

Good Sports

You usually like your friends to be athletic and ready to play. For you, making friends on a sports team is just as important as playing your best.

Care Bears

You're usually drawn toward girls who show they care. Knowing they're always there to support you and share close moments is important to you.

Friendship tip: Don't rule out a friendship just because someone doesn't match a description from the quiz. If you have lots of interests, all different kinds of kids could be good friends for you. You never know what a new friend might have to offer! ★

From *The Quiz Book 2*, available in bookstores in March.

Catch the Spirit!

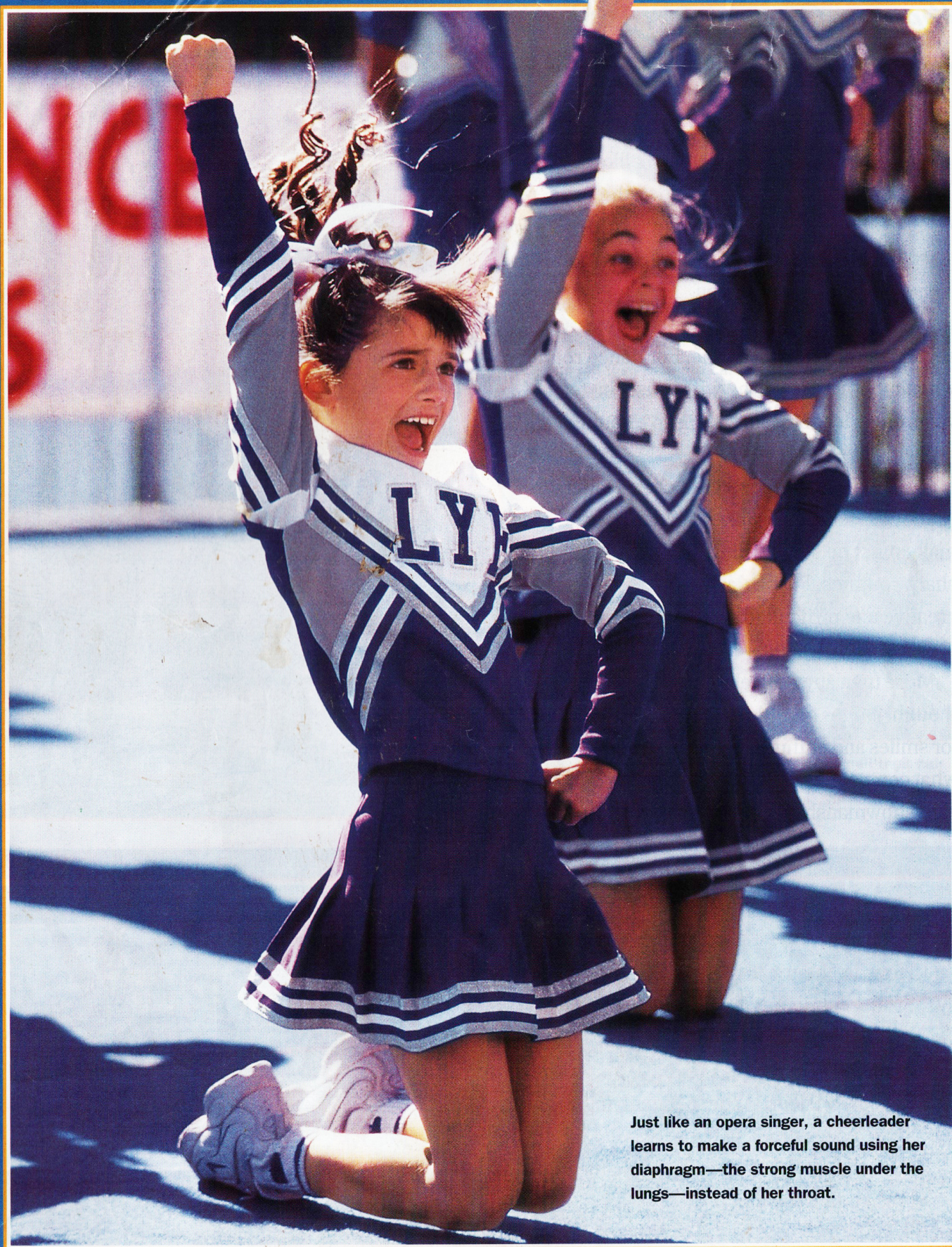
Find out what it takes to be a top cheerleader.

Three minutes. For cheerleaders, that's what it all comes down to. In football or basketball, athletes have a full game to prove their skill. But in the sport of competitive cheerleading, a season of practice can be judged on the basis of a single, three-minute dance routine. A whole squad's spirit gets summed up in one quick cheer!

Competitive cheerleaders have to be great at performing under pressure. These girls are skilled athletes, too. Cheerleaders need strength and coordination for their high jumps. Dancing through the steps of a fast-paced routine requires agility and stamina. All this calls for lots of practice. Starting at age seven or eight, girls rehearse up to five times a week to perfect their cheers and stunts. That's not counting the time they spend competing and, for some girls, cheering at other sports events!

So what does it take to be the best? AG went behind the scenes as some of Central California's top youth squads competed for an invitation to the JAMZ Cheerleading and Dance National Championships. Read on to learn how these vivacious cheerleaders made their move from the sidelines to center stage!





Just like an opera singer, a cheerleader learns to make a forceful sound using her diaphragm—the strong muscle under the lungs—instead of her throat.

Keeping Score

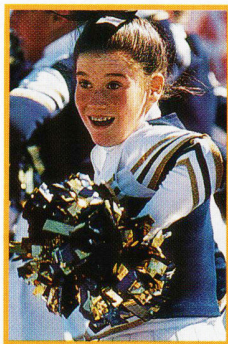


Teamwork is the key to cheerleading success. The girls on each squad must look like a single unit when they're performing. To do this, they

learn their cheers by pairing each word and pause with a specific motion. They memorize the words first, and then they add the moves, one section of the cheer at a time. For dance routines, when motions are paired with music instead of yells, cheerleaders learn steps to a count of eight, repeated over and over.

Coaches constantly remind cheerleaders to "punch it." That's because each motion the girls make must be strong and crisp. Judges look for sharp routines. Particularly creative and difficult moves earn high marks, too.

More than anything else, though, judges give high scores for smiles and enthusiasm—what competitive cheerleaders call "showmanship."



Jump for Joy!

How do cheerleaders learn these lofty leaps? Strength training and practice. Girls do special exercises to build up the muscles in their abdomens, since those muscles help lift the legs in these high-flying moves. Take a closer look at some popular jumps, from the straightforward, simple tuck to the challenging toe touch.



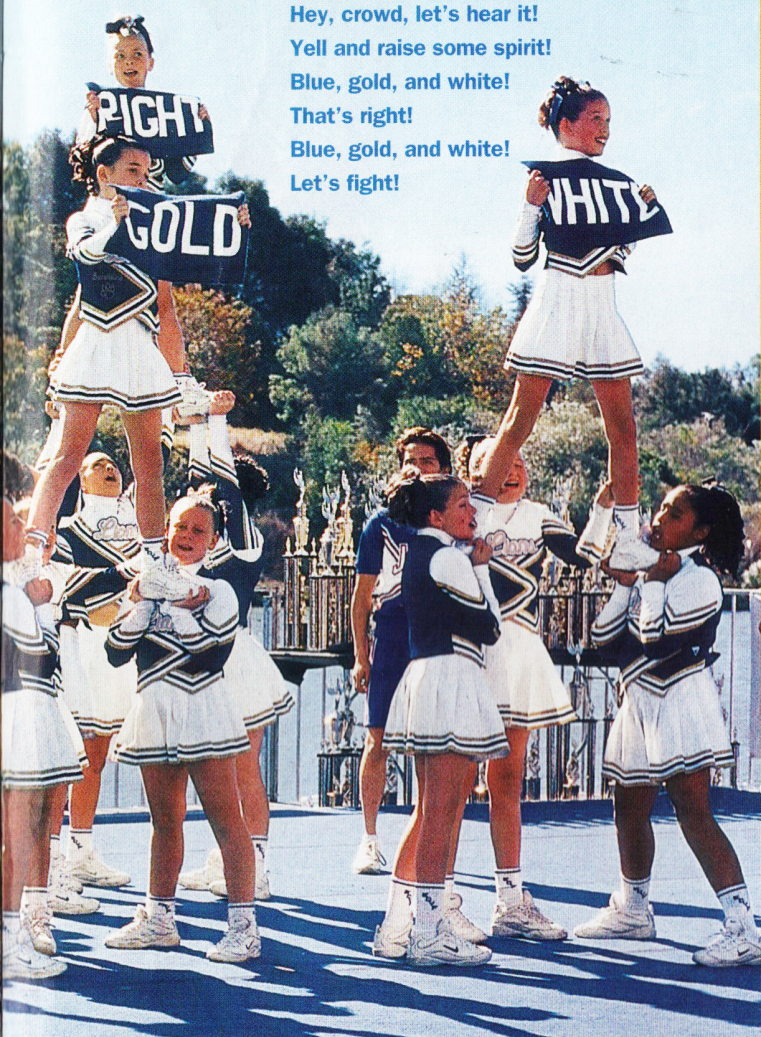
Take off: a deep knee bend builds momentum for a jump.



Tuck

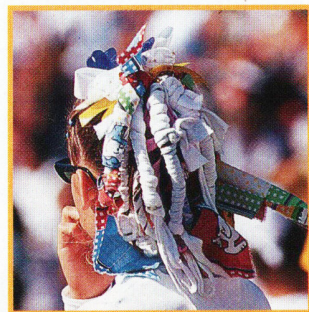
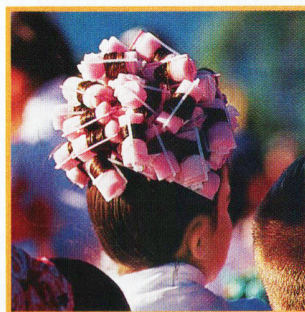
Cheerleaders need to draw the crowd into their performance. The East County Lions rev up the audience with this cheer:

Hey, crowd, let's hear it!
Yell and raise some spirit!
Blue, gold, and white!
That's right!
Blue, gold, and white!
Let's fight!



Flip Your Wig

Cheerleaders use their hair like extra pom-poms, so springy curls are a must!



Most girls roll their hair into curlers the night before a show. For the bounciest hair at show time, they keep the curlers in until right before they're ready to warm up.



Some girls don't bother with curlers. They just pull their hair up into a bun and add mounds of fake curls to get the look they need!



Side Hurdler



Double Hook



Toe Touch

Standing Tall

Lifting a brave teammate a full body's length into the air pushes girls to their limits. Maybe that's why this move is called an *extension*. Never try these moves without adult help!



To start the stunt, the bases (the girls on the bottom) lift the flyer (the girl on top) to shoulder height.

You might think the bases' hands really hurt during this move. But cheerleaders wear shoes specially designed for performing stunts like this one. The soles of the shoes come with built-in hand grips!

The adult in the back is a spotter. The spotter is there to catch the flyer in case anything goes wrong. For safety, these cheerleaders never practice their mounts without a spotter.

It's the job of the bases in the front and back of the pose to keep the flyer steady and to help her if she loses her balance. These girls need to be tall so that they can reach the flyer to help her out.

The bases on the left and right do the heavy lifting. Once the flyer is steady at their shoulders, they extend their arms in one smooth motion, boosting the flyer to the top! These girls need strong leg muscles. That's because cheerleaders do all their stunt lifting with their legs, not their arms or their backs.



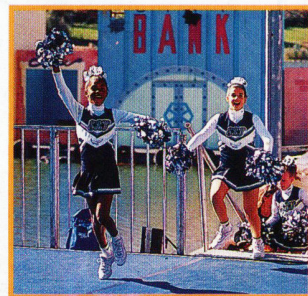
While she's up in the air, the flyer focuses on a spot directly in front of her to keep her balance. She has to concentrate and keep all her muscles flexed to stay steady. Flyers are usually the smallest—or bravest—girls on a squad.



When the girls end the pose, the bases throw the flyer into the air. Then they form a basket with their arms to catch her. "I shoot up in the air, and I have to keep my body straight and lean back like a banana," says flyer Kaylyn Ness. "Sometimes it's scary, but it's fun, too." Flyers need to trust their bases so they can be comfortable falling from the top of a mount.

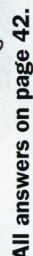
Stealing the Show

The girls put their spirit to the test when they step onstage to perform. "One of our stunts fell, but we put it back up," explains Roxanne Boswell of the Mighty Chargers Elite squad. "The recovery is really important. No matter what happens, you keep smiling and go on with the routine."



It takes dedication to go on with the show after a mistake. That dedication is exactly what makes a great cheerleader. The best cheerleaders devote themselves to practices, competitions, and being true team players. Some of the most successful squads don't even have tryouts—they just ask cheerleaders to commit to the team. These girls prove that a winning attitude really can win the day! ★





Age 10, North Carolina

Age 10, Illinois

Nicole Ramsey

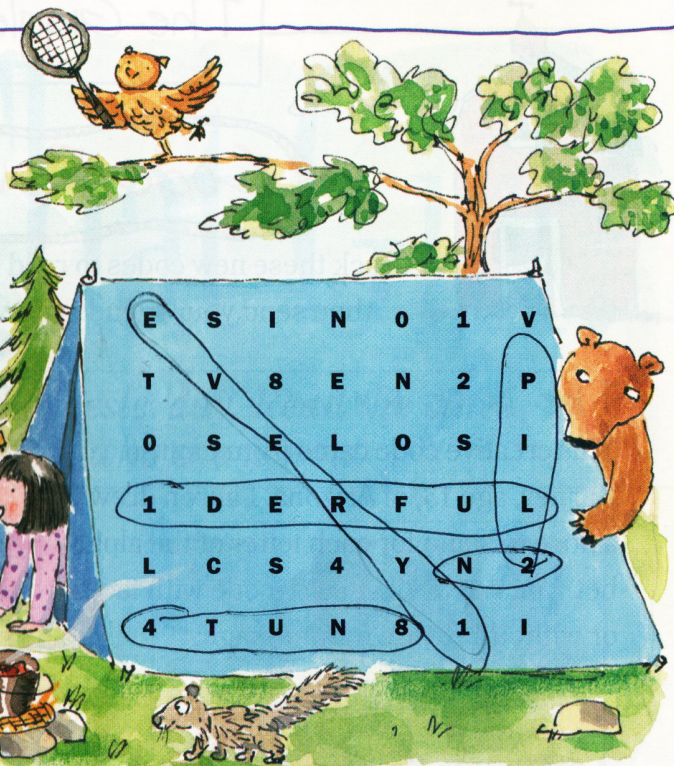
What's the Easter Bunny's favorite game?

#1 Word Search

Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the words listed below. Here's the catch: each word contains the sound of a number. In the puzzle, these number sounds appear as numerals, not as letters.

everyone
forest
fortunate
inflate
stew

tennis
tent
tulip
tune
wonderful



A Ticket, a Tasket

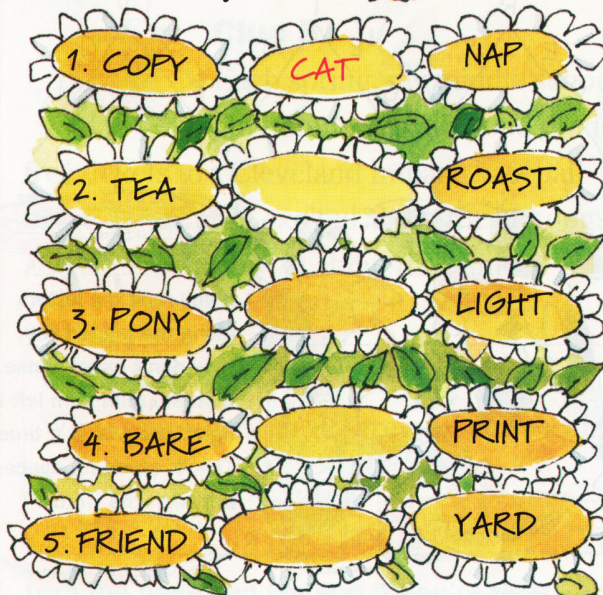
Meredith, Haley, Jill, Shelly, and Rebecca lost their baskets! Use the clues to figure out which Easter treats belong to each girl. Then fill in the name tags on the baskets.

1. Meredith doesn't have any chocolate in her basket.
2. Haley has an odd number of eggs in her basket.
3. Jill doesn't like the color yellow.
4. Shelly is allergic to eggs.



Daisy Chains

Help the Gigggle Gang girls finish their word links. Fill in the blanks with words that make sense when they're combined with the words both before and after them. We did the first one for you.



Hopscotch. Malloy Sauble Why were the baby strawberries crying? Because their parents were in a jam. Age 10, Maryland

Amanda Duke Age 14, Texas

Elizabeth Yodelamer Age 10, Texas
Jennifer Segal Age 9, California
I have a head and a tail but no body. What am I? A penny.

What did the refrigerator say to the stove? "Chill out, man."

Age 11, North Carolina

Beth Basaldua What kind of dog always knows the time? A watchdog! Chelsea west

Age 12, Minnesota

The Giggle Gang



Code Roundup!

Crack these new codes to read some secret messages, then send your friends your own encoded notes!



The Nose Knows

This creative code came from Lauren Barney, age 13, of Arizona. Lauren drew a nose to stand for each letter of the alphabet. You can use Lauren's code with faces or without! Here's our message:



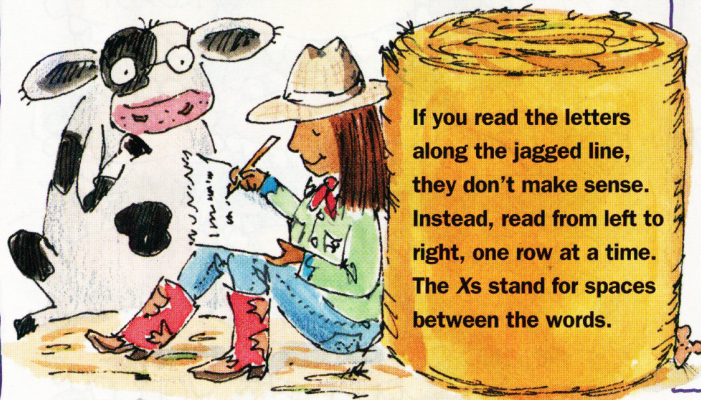
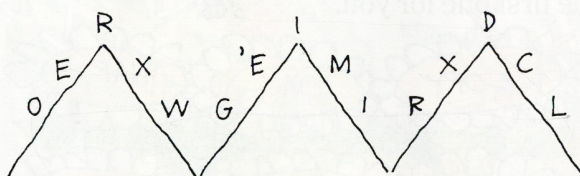
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ↵ | 3 | C | 2 | e | f | G | ↵ | T |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | ↵ | L | m | ↵ | ☺ | P | Q | ↵ |
| J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | J | U | V | ↵ | ✕ | J | Z |
| S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |

Ups and Downs

This cool code came from Kara Sherwood, age 11, of South Carolina. Here's our message:



If you read the letters along the jagged line, they don't make sense. Instead, read from left to right, one row at a time. The Xs stand for spaces between the words.

Answer Box

The buzzword, vivacious, is used on page 34.

Code Roundup:
1. Howdy!
2. Ride 'em cowgirl

Daisy Chains:
Meredith's is purple.
Shelly's is red, and
Halley's is blue.
Rebecca's is yellow,
Jill's basket is pink,
A Tisket, a Tasket:



#1 Word Search:
sign, tuba, and violin.
spot on giraffe, stop
road divider mark,
pigeon, pizza slice,
ribbon, flag stripe,
mustache, first-place
hydrant, fireman's
curb, fire engine, fire
cat, cotton candy,
colored green—
These items are
Seeing Green:
It's Not Easy

How did the dog get rid of her fleas? She started from scratch! Alicia Calkins What's the most limber animal? The ostretch!

Age 11, Oregon

Morgan Bober What do you get when you throw a pumpkin in the air? Squash! Rosanna DeLeon What do you call a flying skunk? A smelly-copter. Kim Maves

Age 10, North Carolina

Age 13, California

Age 10, Wisconsin

Who's That Girl?

Here's an American girl of yesterday. Read the clues about her and guess who she is now.



Clue 1

As the two oldest kids in a busy family, my sister and I were often put in charge of our three energetic younger brothers, including giving first aid for their many scrapes and scratches.



Clue 2

I turned 12 during a family trip from Ohio to Idaho. When we stopped at a Native American trading post, my parents let me choose a beautiful, beaded pair of moccasins—the perfect gift for me!



Clue 3

I spent rainy days writing funny poems and plays. I gave my poems as gifts, and my friends starred in my plays for our families and neighbors.



Clue 4

At 13, my family went searching for the old house in Wisconsin where my dad was born. He described the many details about his early home, even the nearby fields and creek. Sadly, we never found it, but I had a perfect picture of it in my mind.



Here I am at age 12.



Clue 5

Each spring, my middle school gave students with good grades free tickets to a Cleveland Indians baseball game. I was more excited about the hot dogs and cheers than I was about the game!

Take a guess!

When this American girl grew up, she became:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a detective | <input type="checkbox"/> a writer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a scientist | <input type="checkbox"/> a sportscaster |

Turn the page and find out if you're right!

She's Sharon Creech



To spark ideas for her prizewinning books, author Sharon Creech begins by "fishing in the air." She lets her thoughts flow like a river and reels in new ideas. "You let your mind float," Sharon

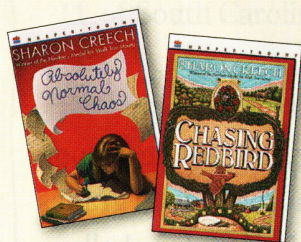
says, "and you pull in whatever images are most vivid and then write them down."

Remembering her childhood inspires her, too. "There was constant chaos in my house when I was a girl, but it was mostly the good kind," explains Sharon, who describes lively

families in her first two books, *Absolutely Normal Chaos* and *Chasing Redbird*.

Away from her busy home, Sharon often

felt shy—choosing to quietly observe a crowd rather than to be in one. On family vacations, young Sharon paid close attention to strangers' accents and habits. At professional baseball games, instead of watching the action on the field, she preferred to take in the roaring fans and busy vendors. "I wanted to memorize everything I saw and heard," Sharon adds, "because it was all so fascinating."



Today, those detailed memories help fill her books with realistic, thoughtful characters on unusual, sometimes mysterious journeys. One of her most famous characters, Sal, from *Walk Two Moons*, takes a cross-country trip to Idaho, much as Sharon did the summer she turned 12. "It was life-altering for me—seeing the vastness of our country, its incredible landscapes, and all kinds of people and their accents," Sharon recalls.

Later this year, watch for Sharon's newest novel, *Love That Dog*. "I love the whole process of writing," Sharon says, "from starting with a blank page, to watching scenes take place, to being swept up in another world!" ★

Sharon's advice to American girls:

"Challenge yourself, stay open to the world, aim high, and don't be dragged down by anyone else."

Sharon Creech

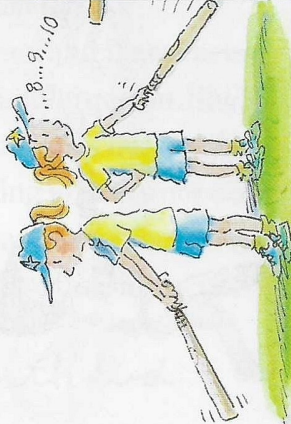
You can write to Sharon
c/o HarperCollins
1350 Avenue of the Americas
Fourth Floor
New York, NY 10019



Photo credits on page 2.

Pick the right bat.

Hold your bat straight out in front of you with one hand. Count to 15.



A



But you have the whole game to **help your team**. What you do at other positions might be more important than hitting the ball.

B

Don't give up.

Baseball is a game of chance.



When you're batting, **watch** the pitcher. When you're hitting, **watch** the ball. When you're fielding, **watch** the batter. When you're catching, **watch** the ball. When you're throwing, **watch** your target.

Wait.

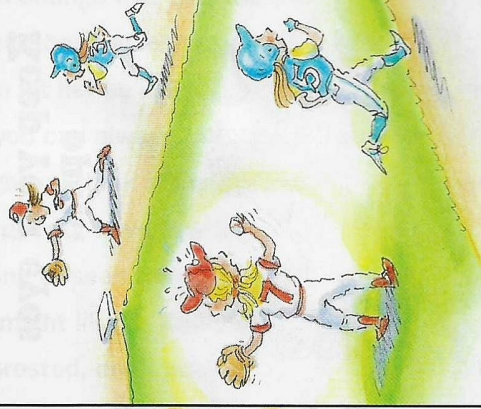
Don't automatically run forward to **catch a fly ball**. It will probably fly right over your head. To stop yourself, take one short step backward whenever a batter hits the ball. Run forward only when you are sure where the ball is going.

C

Get a grip.

Learn to **control the ball** well. Grip it across the stitches, with your middle and index fingers on top and your thumb on the bottom.

Don't let it rest in your palm. Hold it with your fingertips only.



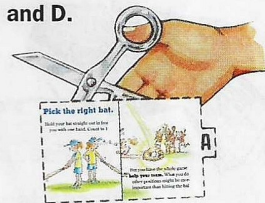
D

Mini Book

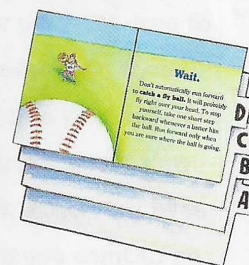
You already know the basics of baseball and softball. Now learn to play like a pro with these top tips. Good luck—and batter up!

To make this book, all you need are scissors and a stapler. Be sure to read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1 Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.



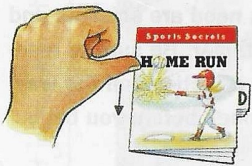
2 Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.



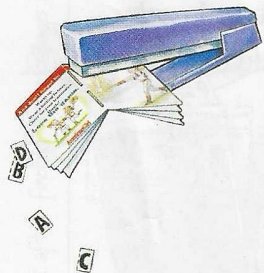
Continued

Mini Book

3 Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the book should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.

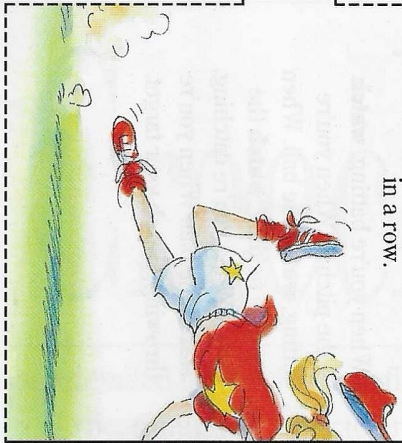


4 Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!

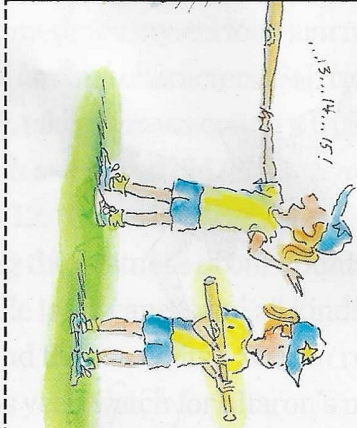


Don't get discouraged.

You might strike out 50 times in a row.



If the bat is drooping, pick a lighter one. **You can't control a bat that is too heavy.**



And don't forget to:

Warm up.
Wear a batting helmet.
Cheer for your teammates.
Hustle!

Love the game.



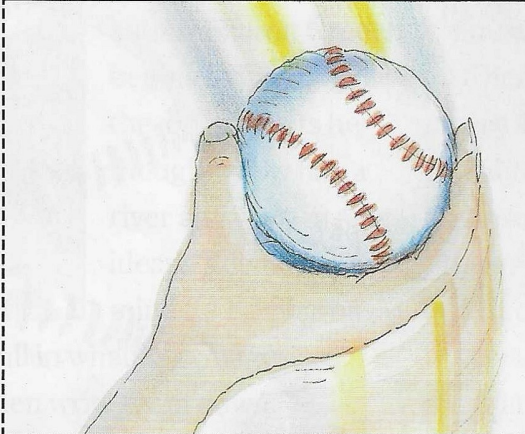
Sports Secrets

HOME RUN



Think ahead.

Before each batter steps to the plate, **figure out where you need to throw the ball** in case it is hit to you. You won't have time to decide after the ball is hit!



Keep your eyes open.



Even if it looks like you are going to be tagged out, **keep running**. A throw might be wild, or a player might drop the ball.



HELP!

Dear American Girl,

My mom walks me to the bus stop, and it's embarrassing! If I tell her I don't want her to do it anymore, it will hurt her feelings. What do I do?

Identity Crisis

Do you know **why** your mom walks with you? If safety's the reason, chances are she won't let you go alone. Maybe she wants to spend more time with you. Think about it: will you miss talking with her about what's happening at school or your weekend plans? If so, think twice about giving that up. But if you still want to go by yourself, say, "Mom, I think I'm ready to walk alone." She won't be as hurt if you focus on your independence instead of your embarrassment.



Dear American Girl,

My best friend and I have been buds since kindergarten. She's very nice, and so is her family. The only thing is, she's not cool! I want to change that, but I don't want to change the side of her that is nice.

help with bud



What's cool changes all the time, but your friendship has lasted for many years. Don't risk losing a good friend over the latest fad. If you try to change this girl, you could insult her and lose her as a friend. So let her be herself. Of course, you can always talk about the things you think are cool. Your friend might not have heard the latest song or seen the new style, and she might like it. But if she isn't interested, don't push it.



Dear American Girl,

My mom's friend's son *likes* me! I don't really like him, and I don't want to be his friend, but I don't want to hurt his feelings.

Irritated

This boy will be upset that you don't like him, but that's not

your fault. You can let him down without being mean. Say, "It's nice that you like me, but I don't feel the same way about you." And if you need to, you can say, "Please leave me alone." Also, let Mom know what's going on. She may have some good advice.



Dear American Girl,

I'm in fifth grade, and I don't know how to ride a bike!

Whenever I ask my parents to help, they just say, "Next time." But they never help.

Uncomfortable

Why not teach yourself? While you learn, your bike seat should be low enough that you can easily put a foot down while seated. (After you learn, raise the seat so that just your toe can touch down.) Find a flat, safe place without any traffic, like a paved lot or path. Be sure to wear a helmet. Pedal first, then coast and try to keep your balance. If you start to fall, put a foot down to steady yourself. Keep your eyes up and look where you want to go. Learning to ride takes practice, so don't get discouraged. Good luck!

MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I'm not good at art. My friends are better than I am, and no matter what I do, I always seem to mess up my project. Can you give me some pointers on how to become a better artist?

Anti-artsy

Before you start a project, take a deep breath and relax. Make sure you understand the directions. Give yourself plenty of time to work—rushing won't make things turn out better. If you get stuck, ask your teacher. These tips will help, but remember: there's no one "right" way to do art. Also, there are lots of kinds of art. Not good at pottery? Try painting, weaving, photography—you get the point. There are plenty of ways to be creative, and in the end, that's what art is all about.



Dear American Girl,

I am going to my grandpa's funeral. It's my first funeral, and I'm scared. What should I do?

Scared

Every funeral is different, so ask your parents to explain what will



happen. You'll feel better once you know who'll be there and what to expect. You may feel sad at the funeral, but you'll also enjoy hearing stories about your grandpa. If you need a break, ask if you can go read or visit with someone quietly in another room. Think of a funeral as a celebration of someone's life. It's a chance to share feelings, comfort each other, and say goodbye to someone you love.



Dear American Girl,

I am always the one to make peace when I have a fight with a friend. I wish I wasn't, but I don't want my friendships to end.

Peacemaker

It's not bad to be the first one to say, "I'm sorry." But the peace won't last long if you're mad

about always being the one to apologize. Are the friendships really worth it? If so, be the peacemaker. But if you're upset all the time or your friends never say they're sorry, it might be better to focus on other friends.



Advice from You

"If you play an instrument and get frustrated when you mess up, take some time to cool down. Read a book, listen to the radio, play with a sibling, eat a snack, or even take a bubble bath before you start again. I used to get furious and want to smash my viola, but now I do something else instead. It's easier to go back and play when I'm not mad."

Elise Zuke
Age 12, Illinois

Need advice? Got advice? Write: Help!

AmericanGirl

**8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562**

Shining Star

According to Sabrina Warren, taking care of pigs is not such a dirty job! This pig-lover should know. Thanks in part to Sabrina's hard work, many homeless pet pigs have found a place to live.


Sometimes people buy potbellied pigs to keep as pets. The piglets start out tiny, but they eventually grow to about 125 pounds—or more! Sadly, some owners aren't prepared to live with these portly pets. At Pigs-A-Lot, an Arizona pig sanctuary run by Sabrina's stepmom, unwanted pigs find a happy, safe home.

Sabrina, 11, helps care for more than 200 animals. Collecting pig food—leftovers from restaurants and grocery stores—is one of Sabrina's jobs. She also rakes and cleans the pigpens. Sabrina loves to help out with the piglets, too. "I calm them down so they get used to people," she says. Pigs-A-Lot offers permanent pens to pigs in need. The sanctuary also finds new, loving homes for many pigs.

Sabrina thinks potbellied pigs make great pets. "They're easy to handle, and a pig's memory is really good," she explains. But she wants people to know that pigs need special attention. Pigs should have access to the outdoors, and they need protection from both hot and cold weather. "Pigs like to get love from everyone," says Sabrina, "but some people are too busy. A pig is not a pet to just leave in your backyard."

Do you have a friend who really shines as a volunteer? Maybe you're a star volunteer yourself. Write to the address on page 2 to tell us all about the shining stars you know! Each girl we honor receives an official certificate and a sparkly star pendant—and AG will donate \$500 to her cause. ★





AmericanGirl®

Coming up in the May/June issue

Pages of Petals

Fabulous flowery gifts to make

Grin and Win

Throw a great game-show party!

Dress for Distress

Amelia's got the bridesmaid blues

Plus:

A new paper doll!

Can't wait for
your next issue? Visit
www.americangirl.com
for lots more fun! Go
behind the scenes and
make up a cheer for
your school!